BROADWAY PRIMERS

1 CARLETON ST.,
TORONTO.

A PRIMER OF BROWNING

By

EDWARD BERDOE, M.R.C.S., ETC

Author of "The Browning Cyclopædia," etc

LONDON:

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO

1904

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE BROWNING . . CYCLOPÆDIA

Fourth Edition. Pages xviii-576. Price 10/6

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Conscientious and painstaking."—*The Times.*

"A work suggestive of immense industry."—*Morning Post.*

"It is not too much to say that Dr. Berdoe has earned the gratitude of every reader of Browning, and has materially aided the study of English literature in one of its ripest developments."—*British Weekly.*

"A most learned and creditable piece of work. Not a difficulty is shirked."—*Vanity Fair.*

"A monument of industry and devotion."—*Bookman.*

BROWNING'S MESSAGE TO HIS TIME

His Religion, Philosophy and Science.

With Portrait and Facsimile Letters.

Third Edition. Price 3/6.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Full of admiration and sympathy."—*Saturday Review.*

"Should have a wide circulation; it is interesting and stimulative."—*Literary World.*

"We have no hesitation in strongly recommending this little volume to any who desire to understand the moral and mental attitude of Robert Browning."—*Oxford University Herald.*

INTRODUCTION

THERE are few works in our literature which so well repay careful and loving study as the poems of Robert Browning. To know Browning well is to have acquired a liberal education. The British public have taken a long time in finding this out, but it is now recognized that his claims cannot be neglected by those who would think high thoughts and commune with noble souls.

It has been the fashion to call the poet obscure, analytical and introspective, and this by those who have never taken the pains to learn really what he is. The truth is, he frequently deals with subjects that in their nature are profound; but though he treats obscure matters deeply, it is not true to say that he deals with deep subjects obscurely. As a poet he is very varied. He has written many exquisite love poems, some charming lyrics, many dramatic monologues, and has told the story of a crowd of half-forgotten persons more or less important in their time and way.

The aim of this Primer is to indicate briefly the subjects treated in the different poems, and to indicate in plain language their main outlines.

In many of the poems the thoughts are expressed in highly concentrated form, and much

food for reflection is given in three or four words or lines. In such cases the reader unaccustomed to fixing the mind closely on everything read will often miss Browning's meaning, and derive little profit from the perusal.

For example, we are told in "Easter-Day," that "a scientific faith's absurd." In "Christmas-Eve" we read that—

> "God, whose pleasure brought
> Man into being, stands away
> As it were a handbreadth off, to give
> Room for the newly-made to live."

In "Sordello"—

> "Evil, the scheme by which, thro' Ignorance,
> Good labours to exist."

In "By the Fireside" we see—

> "How the world is made for each of us!"

and the thoughtful student will not need to be told that in each of these passages there is food for reflection which would require many pages of comment to explain. The gold is never beaten into leaf in Browning: he gives it in nuggets; rough at times, but precious always. In such expressions as

> "Little things go lessening, till at last
> Comes God behind them."

and

> "The mere atoms despise me."

we have the utmost that science can tell us of the origin of life, creation and matter. We may

pick up gems like these in every page of Browning, and the loss is great to those who do not seek diligently till they find them.

Browning's expression is not only concentrated, but he is exceedingly sparing in his words, and he abbreviates his particles or discards them altogether in a way that is often grotesque. Thus we have

> " The wrong i' the matter." " Sting o' the creature." " Curd o' the cream, flower o' the wheat." " What i' the way of final flourish ! " " Prose, Verse ? Try ! "

But the greatest difficulty of all is Browning's vast and varied learning, especially in connexion with out-of-the-way and half-forgotten subjects. He seems to know everything, and in the most ingenuous manner gives his readers credit for an erudition equal to his own.

The student is advised to begin the study of Browning with the shilling volume of *Selections*. With the aid of the Primer the main idea of each poem can readily be discovered, and a thoughtful perusal of the poem itself ought to make all plain. But Browning is not amusement. He stimulates, and if studied at all will at least compel his readers to think.

EDWARD BERDOE.

LONDON, *January* 8, 1904.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

ROBERT BROWNING was born at Camberwell on May 7, 1812. He was educated at a Peckham School till he was near fourteen, then had a private tutor at home, and attended lectures at University College, London. In 1834 he travelled in Russia. He married Elizabeth Barrett when he was thirty-four, and in 1847 resided with his wife in Florence. In 1855 the Brownings travelled in Normandy. On June 28, 1861, Mrs. Browning died. Robert Browning died in Venice, December 12, 1889, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, December 31. The dates of the publication of all the poet's works are given in the notes to the poems described in this Primer.

A Primer of Browning

PAULINE.

(1833.)

Pauline : A Fragment of a Confession.—This was the poet's first work, written when he was twenty years old. As a whole it is nebulous, although in many parts it condenses into brilliant stars. To a certain extent it is a psychological analysis of the poet's personality, and admits us to the secret chambers of his thoughts. Crude and inchoate as it is, it contains the rudiments of all the noblest and finest work by which Browning was to achieve immortality. *Ex pede Herculem.* There were those who read the anonymous poem who detected that an original genius had been born into the literary world, and although in after years Browning was ashamed of his earliest work, we would not now willingly lose a line of it. It is embryonic, and as we do not study embryology until we have learned our anatomy and physiology, the student should postpone the reading of "Pauline" until he knows more of the poet's normal work.

It is a fragmentary monologue, introspective, imaginative, and replete with a passionate desire for a supreme universal God, a restlessness

Which would be all, have, see, know, taste, feel all.

It is a confession of moods and mental attitudes, not of deeds ; a soul's awakening, a revelation of high ideals with low aims, a conviction that earth is not the sphere of the human soul because man cannot so narrow himself but he exceeds it. He loves a woman. " Pauline, I am thine for ever." " Love me, Pauline—leave me not." Divine love works his redemption and restoration, mediated too by the love of Pauline.

PARACELSUS.

(1835.)

Paracelsus.—Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus of Hohenheim, who lived 1493-1541, was one of the most remarkable characters in the history of medicine and science. He was born ten years later than Luther, at Einsiedeln, near Zurich, studied magic, alchemy and astrology, and after his course at the University of Basel studied chemistry in the laboratory of the Fuggers in the Tyrol. He then travelled widely as a military surgeon, and afterwards wandered in Bohemian fashion over the world, picking up knowledge by observation and converse with peasants, by any means rather than from books. He investigated Nature at first hand. Despising authority, he bent his head to no man. After this he became a professor at Basel, was distinguished as a physician, effecting great cures with medicines of his own discovery, burned the books of his predecessors, and becoming detested by his colleagues, was driven from Basel by the priests and doctors, who denounced him as a mountebank and a

quack. In 1541 he died in the hospital of Salzburg from injuries received from the servants of certain physicians, his jealous enemies. He was a true martyr of science. He left one hundred and six treatises on scientific and philosophical subjects. He discovered the metal zinc and hydrogen gas, invented laudanum, and anticipated our discovery of transfusion of blood, introduced the use of mercury into medicine, and came very near to the discoveries which go under the name of Darwinism.

Browning has taken the facts of the life of this hero of medicine, and built up for us the study of a soul whose whole passion was the acquisition of knowledge, and with marvellous insight, having evolved from his study of what was authentic in relation to Paracelsus, has not only given us a noble poem, but has divined the true character of his hero, who, when Browning wrote in 1835, was esteemed nothing better than a quack, and has raised him to his true niche in the temple of fame. If we read the article "Alchemy" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," we see that men of science have recognized Browning's great poem as a far truer estimate of the man's work than any we had previously. He had errors—they were the faults of his time—but no great discoverer is a charlatan.

The Poem is divided into five books.

PARACELSUS ASPIRES: Book I. The scene is laid at Würzburg (1512). Paracelsus the student, taking leave of his friends, Festus and Michal, tells how he feels that he has a great commission from God; he dare not subdue the vast longings

for knowledge which fill his soul. Festus tells him that he ought not to despise the ordinary means of learning. Paracelsus protests that he will abjure the idle acts of magic; he goes to prove his soul, to comprehend not only the works of God, but God Himself. Michal, the tender woman-friend, urges him to cast his dreams away, and warns him against his pride. Paracelsus begs that their love may not hinder his obedience to his high mission.

> Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michal,
> Two points in the adventure of the diver,
> One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
> One—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?
> Festus, I plunge!
>
> *Festus.* We wait you when you rise!

Paracelsus Attains: Book II. The scene is a Greek conjurer's house in Constantinople (1521). He has made discoveries, but they have not satisfied his great ambition. He needs rest for his overwrought brain; he will learn from magic what hard work has failed to yield him. His heart was human once, now love has gone. God, perhaps, to confound his pride, has stricken his mind. And now from within he hears a voice—it is that of Aprile, the spirit of a departed poet whose aspiration was to love beauty only. Paracelsus sought knowledge alone. Aprile would love infinitely all forms of art and all the delights of Nature. Paracelsus demands that he should do obeisance to him, the Knower. Aprile refuses to acknowledge the kingship of one who knows nothing of the loveliness of life. Paracelsus now sees the error into which both have fallen. He

has excluded love, as Aprile has excluded knowledge; they are two halves of one dissevered world. Paracelsus feels that he has attained, but it is earthly attainment, not Divine union, that he seeks.

PARACELSUS : Book III. At Basle, 1526, Festus meets his old friend, now a famous Professor at the University—"life's dispenser, idol of the courts and schools." His pupils crowd the benches and worship the man. Paracelsus admits his outward success, but owns that at heart he is miserable. He aspired to know God : he has attained—a professorship at Basle ! He has wrought cures, made discoveries, has a pile of diplomas, and in place of his high aims a host of petty, vile delights have arisen within him. He has become brutal—half-mad.

PARACELSUS ASPIRES : Book IV. The scene is at Colmar, at an inn, 1528. He has sent for Festus to tell him that he is exposed to the world as a quack, is an outcast from those who lately worshipped him. His pupils grew tired of him when he attempted to teach them, the faculty drew off from him when their old methods were interfered with, so he turn d his back upon the University. Once more the philosopher has started on his travels, not now as a lean ascetic, but embracing all the joys of life. Festus warns him that the base pleasures which have superseded his nobler aims will never content him, and urges him to resume the past and return with him to Einsiedeln. Paracelsus declares this to be impossible, his baser life forbids. A sneering devil is within him. He tries to drown his disappoint-

ment in wine. This fails him now; he can hardly sink deeper. Festus attempts to comfort and advise. He, too, has felt sorrow. Sweet Michal is dead. This rouses Paracelsus to endeavour on his part to comfort Festus by declaring his faith in the soul's immortality.

Paracelsus Attains: Book V. In 1541 Paracelsus lies dying in a cell in the hospital at Salzburg. Watching him through the night is his faithful friend, praying for the tortured champion of man. Paracelsus awakes: his failing strength struggles like the flame of an expiring taper. In half-delirious phrases he tells of the insults he endured at Basle, where they called him quack, and cheat, and liar. He calls on God for one hour of strength to set his heart on Him and love. He recognizes Festus, who tells him that God will take him to His breast, and on earth splendour shall rest upon his name for ever. Paracelsus knows that he is dying, but he will rise and speak standing, as becomes a teacher of men. He has sinned, he feels his need for mercy, and he can trust God. How much of God he had learned! His joy in creation: His intentions with regard to man His final work, the product of the world's remotest ages; its æons of preparation; the love mingling with everything that tended towards the highest work of creation; the progress which is the law of life. He can descry the tendency to God even in man's present imperfection. He sees the great error of his life, how he had overlooked the God in man; how he had failed to note the good in evil, and to detect the love beneath the mask of hate; how he had denied the

half-reasons, the faint aspirings, the struggles for truth; the littleness in man, yet the upward tendency in all his weakness. All this he knew not, and he failed. And so he sinks to rest.

[For a complete study of the life and work of Paracelsus, and Browning's poem thereon, I may refer the reader to the chapter, "Paracelsus, the Reformer of Medicine," in my "Browning's Message to his Time."]

STRAFFORD.

(1837.)

Strafford: A Tragedy.—This tragedy, in five acts, has for its plot the impeachment of the Earl of Strafford and his condemnation and execution.

The poem deals with the devotion of Strafford to his sovereign, whom he loves, but with whose cause he has no sympathy. The contrast between the loyalty of the subject and the treachery of the King, whose character in Browning's hands fares ill enough, is boldly marked. Strafford serves one man only—Charles—and leaves the patriots to fight for England as best they may. Lady Carlisle warns Strafford of his danger, and begs him to secure his retreat while he can do so. He is unmoved—his blind devotion to an unworthy ideal could have only ruin in the end. Defeated in the North, he finds that Charles has treacherously listened to proposals of reconciliation with the Scotch, and that the patriots are in league with them. He is impeached and imprisoned in the Tower. Charles makes no effort to save him,

and signs his death-warrant at the request of Pym. Lady Carlisle, with the King's connivance, arranges a plan for Strafford's escape. He refuses to run away, and is led to execution. Dr. Todhunter says the personages of the tragedy are "monomaniacs of ideas"—Strafford of loyalty to his King, Lady Carlisle of loyalty to the infatuation of Strafford, Pym of loyalty to an ideal England. "Browning has not left the King even a rag of conventional royalty to cover his nakedness. He has stript him with a vengeance." But Browning was by no means historically accurate in this tragedy, nor did he intend to be.

SORDELLO.

(1840.)

Sordello.—This poem also is a study of a soul. It is a picture of the troublous times of the early part of the thirteenth century in North Italy. Sordello was a troubadour who is referred to by Dante in his "Purgatory." His history is involved in the obscurity of romance, but that he was a skilful Provençal poet is certain. He was also a brave soldier, and died about the middle of the thirteenth century. Sordello was born at Goito, near Mantua, and was for some time attached to the household of the Count of St. Boniface, the chief of the Guelf party, in the March of Treviso. The age in which Sordello lived was illuminated by the most brilliant chivalric virtues and disgraced by the most atrocious crimes. Heroes and monsters stand out prominently in the turbulent history of the time.

The people were haunted by the recollection of the ferocious Ezzelino, tyrant of Verona. It was said that Sordello had married a daughter or sister of Ezzelino. Contemporary writers disproved by their testimony these brilliant stories, and probably the glory attaching to his memory is largely due to the admiration which Dante expresses for him. Dante met him at the portals of Purgatory, amid those who had perished by violence without a chance of repenting them of their sins. When he saw Virgil he cried: "Oh Mantuan, I am Sordello of thy country!"

The whole story of the real Sordello, says Professor Sonnenschein, is a curious instance of development. Originally a troubadour, apparently with most of the vices, faults, and virtues of the typical troubadour of the thirteenth century, he gradually became, as the centuries advanced, first a hero of romance, a *preux-chevalier* and model Italian knight-errant, and finally that which we see Browning has made of him. It is impossible to understand the poem without a fair knowledge of the history of the period in which Sordello lived and sang. Frederick II was Emperor and Honorius III was Pope. The Guelfs and the Ghibellines were in conflict with each other. "The first encounter between the two parties took place at Vicenza towards 1194. Eccelino the Second, who allied himself with the republics of Verona and Padua, was exiled from Vicenza, himself, his whole family and his faction, by a Podestà, his enemy. Before submitting to this sentence, he undertook to defend himself by setting fire to the neighbouring houses; a great

part of the town was burned during the conflict, in which Eccelino was beaten. These were the first scenes of confusion and massacre which met the eyes of the son of the Lord of Romano, the ferocious Eccelino the Third, born 4th of April, 1194" ("Biographie Universelle").

The Guelfs supported the Pope, whilst the Ghibellines adhered to the Emperor Frederick. Taurello Salinguerra was the right-hand man of Eccelino and also of his son. In 1200 he was head of the Ghibelline faction in Ferrara. In 1205 the head of the Guelf faction, both in Ferrara and the March of Verona, was Azzo VI, Marquis of Este. In 1207 Azzo VI was compelled by Eccelino da Onara to retire from Verona. Salinguerra expelled from that city all the adherents of Marquis Azzo, and began to act as Lord of Ferrara. In 1208 Azzo VI expelled Salinguerra, who in 1209 re-entered Ferrara. About 1210 peace was re-established between Azzo VI and Salinguerra. In 1221 Azzo VII defeated Salinguerra and burned his palace. In 1222 the Ghibelline cause prevailed at Ferrara; Azzo and the Guelfs had to leave the city. Salinguerra, pretending to make peace, captured Azzo VII and his company; to avenge this, siege was laid to a favourite stronghold of Salinguerra, and it was starved into submission. Salinguerra appealed to Eccelino da Romano, and they studied to crush the Guelfs, of whom the Marquis of Este was the chief. In 1225 the Lombard League procured the release of Count Richard, who took refuge in Mantua, but ultimately returned to Verona. In 1227 Eccelino the Younger was established in Verona,

and Count Richard was again expelled. In 1230 the Ghibellines raised a riot and imprisoned Count Richard, and Salinguerra was made Podestà. In 1240 Pope Gregory IX incited the Lombards and the Marquis of Este to besiege Ferrara. The Doge of Venice attended in person ; the Mantuans concurred. Peace was soon after restored, and Salinguerra came to the camp of the confederates, was entrapped, and sent to Venice as a prisoner, where he ended his days in holy peace, and the House of Este, after so many years, re-entered Ferrara.

In 1235 Eccelino II retired to a monastery ; his son, Eccelino III, became very powerful, kept all Italy in turmoil, and was notorious for his tyranny and cruelty. He was excommunicated by the Pope in 1255, and a crusade was preached against him. In 1259 he was wounded in battle, taken prisoner, and died. All the cities he had conquered revolted. Adelaide was the second wife of Eccelino II. She was saved, with her infant son, Eccelino III, by the devotion of an archer, Elcorte, who perished. Salinguerra's wife Retrude was taken to Adelaide's castle at Goito, where she died, leaving her baby to the care of Adelaide, who brought him up under the name of Sordello as her page, thus deceiving his father, who thought him dead. She gave out that the child was the son of Elcorte the archer, whom she had adopted. The Palma, who is the heroine of the poem, was the daughter of Eccelino by Agnes Este. Her historical name was Cunizza.

When the great rejoicings took place at Mantua after the defeat of the Guelfs, Sordello competed

in song with other troubadours, was declared the winner of the prize, and was made poet to the Lady Palma. He fell in love with her, but she was destined for the bride of Count Richard of Boniface, but it was rumoured that she would refuse him. Sordello, Master of the Realms of Song, became indolent, failed to reach his ideal, and his degradation was complete. Sordello was chosen to sing the praises of Salinguerra. He refused, and ran away. He is now required to compose a marriage hymn for Palma's betrothal to Richard of St. Boniface. He hastens to meet Palma at Verona. He discovers that she loves him, and she arranges to fly with Sordello to Salinguerra as arbitrator. Sordello, seeing the misery of the people of Ferrara, espouses their cause, and learns his altruism. Sordello resolves to build up a Rome which should mean the Rights of Mankind. But the splendid dream vanished; he could imagine, but could not build. Talking was his trade; he tries to convert Taurello Salinguerra to his views and bend him to the Guelf cause. But Taurello determines to win Sordello to the Ghibellines; he invests Sordello with the Emperor's badge, and Palma tells Taurello that Adelaide on her death-bed confessed that Sordello was Taurello's own son, who did not perish as he believed at Vicenza. Palma hurries Taurello away, that Sordello may collect his thoughts. Now is the great temptation. On the one hand, he may be chief of the Ghibellines, espousing the Emperor's cause, with Palma for his bride. On the other hand was the People's cause. So he lovingly eyes the tempter's apple.

After all, what was the difference between Guelf and Ghibelline ?

The conflict in his soul rages. He has tried to satisfy its longing, and has failed ; why not seek now the common joys of men ? Palma and Taurello hear a foot-stamp as they discuss the future, in the room where they left Sordello, and " out they too reeled dizzily." They reach the chamber door and dash aside the veil, only to find Sordello dead, " under his foot the badge." Has he lost or won ? He learned how to live, as he came to die. He made the Great Renunciation, and in seeming defeat he achieved his soul's success.

Sordello is the most difficult to understand of all Browning's works. This is partly due to the complicated psychological problems introduced, making it so involved that it has been compared to a pathlesss Brazilian forest in which the traveller, amidst the most luxurious vegetation and wealth of floral beauty, infallibly loses his way. But a study of the history of the times in which the characters lived will do much to aid the reader in finding his road, though he will be well rewarded even if he misses it, as he can hardly fail to be gratified and instructed by the noble and beautiful passages with which every page of the poem is enriched. The plot is not the whole work.

PIPPA PASSES.

(1841.)

Pippa Passes : A Drama.—Pippa is a poor girl employed at the silk mills at Asolo, in the Trevisan, in Northern Italy. She has but a

single day's holiday in the whole year ; it is New Year's day, and she determines to make the most of it. At daybreak she rises and determines what she will do with morning, noon, evening and night. She knows that there are four persons in the town whom she thinks are most to be envied, and she will imagine herself each of them in turn. There is Ottima, the great lady whose old husband Luca sleeps in his mansion while his wife meets her lover Sebald ; the sculptor Jules will wed his Phene to-day ; Luigi meets his lady-mother at eventide ; Monsignor from Rome will visit his brother's home, and so, whether the day be fine or stormy, all these people will be happy ; but for Pippa she prays the day may be fine, as it is the only day in the year for her. Here there are four kinds of love. Lover's love, husband's love, a mother's love, and God's love. Pippa determines she will be Monsignor, the holy and happy priest. She starts out singing, and her work to-day is to carry God's message to the consciences of these four persons whom she has been envying in her innocent way. Guilty Ottima and her lover had murdered Luca that they might be free in their sin.

As Pippa, passes the house they hear her sing "God's in His heaven." They are both disenchanted, and the woman takes all the guilt upon herself. Pippa has converted both. While Pippa is passing to Orcana some students from Venice are enjoying a jest they have played off on the young sculptor Jules. By sham letters they have tricked him into marrying a woman whom he loves, believing her to be worthy of his attachment ; at noon the truth is told him just as the ceremony

W. E. CUMMER
1 CARLETON ST.

is over. He gives his bride gold and prepares to separate from her, but Pippa passes singing, "Give her but a least excuse to love me!" Jules reasons, "This woman needs my love." He will evoke her moral sense in some isle in far-off seas. He forgives her. Pippa's song has worked the reconciliation.

When evening comes Luigi, a "patriot," is discussing with his mother a plot to kill the Emperor of Austria. His mother endeavours to dissuade him, and urges him to postpone his journey to Vienna till the morning. He is inclined to yield, when Pippa passes singing, "No need the king should ever die!" Luigi says, "It is God's voice calls," and leaves the house, thus escaping the police, who were on their way to arrest him. At night Pippa draws near to the house of the Bishop's brother, close to the Cathedral, and here we are shown how little we mortals know what passes in the hearts of those whom we envy and admire. She would be Ottima, the murderess; the bride of Jules just detected in fraud; the happy Luigi, who so narrowly escaped an Austrian dungeon; and above all she would be the holy Monsignor, who is actually engaged with one of his officials in a plot to effect her ruin. For she is his niece, and he has appropriated her inheritance, and now takes steps to be rid of her. Pippa passes singing a verse that ends, "Suddenly God took me." Monsignor springs up crying, "Gag this villain! Remove him, quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!*"

How near God is to us all in conscience! How wonderfully the weakest and most insignificant of us may influence our fellow-men! A word, a look

may save a brother or sister : a hundred times a day we may be doing God's work or the devil's

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES.

(1842.)

King Victor and King Charles : A Tragedy —Victor Amadeus II, born in 1666, was Duke of Savoy. He was fierce and selfish, profound in discrimination, and a "breaker of vows both to God and man." But he was an able and warlike monarch, beloved by the people, and a benefactor to his country. In 1715 his favourite son Victor died; his second son Charles Emanuel had never been a favourite with the King. After the death of his Queen in 1728, the King decided to abdicate in favour of his son Charles Emanuel. He gave out that he was weary of affairs of State and wished to end his days in retirement. It is probable that his real motives lay much deeper. He was involved in difficulties of State policy from which he could only extricate himself by this grave step. His people, his ministers, and his son entreated him to forego his project, but he carried it out with the completest ceremonial, and retired with his second wife to his castle at Chambery. Then he grew weary of his solitude, his temper became violent, and his wife suggested that he had acted unwisely in resigning his crown. He still remained on good terms with his son, who visited him at Chambery.

In 1731 Charles heard that his father was about to proceed to Turin to resume the crown he had resigned. His father gave as his reason that he

only desired a climate more suitable to his present state of health. Charles was satisfied, and placed the castle of Moncalieri at his father's service. Victor sent for the Marquis del Borgo on September 25, 1731, and ordered him to deliver up the deed by which he had resigned the crown. The minister informed the King of the demand, and Charles was inclined to waver, as he was a good, obedient son. He consulted the chief officers of State, and it was agreed that it was impossible to comply with the old king's demand. It was afterwards found necessary that Victor should be arrested. The Marquis d'Ormea, who had been the old king's prime minister, executed the warrant of arrest, and Victor was conveyed to the castle of Rivoli near Turin. On October 31, 1732, he died.

DRAMATIC LYRICS.

Dramatic Lyrics (184– 185–).

Cavalier Tunes.

1. Marching Along.
2. Give a Rouse.
3. Boot and Saddle.

Stirring Royalist songs in the interests of King Charles I, and in denunciation of the Roundheads. Dr. Villiers Stanford has set them to music.

The Lost Leader.—This poem is a very popular one. It is the sorrowful lament of disciples for the defection of their leader from the principles of Liberalism, and, as Browning admitted, refers to Wordsworth, who in his youth had strong sympathies with that cause, but lost them in later life.

"How they brought the good News from Ghent to Aix" [16–]. —There is no actual historical basis for the incidents of this stirring poem, but they were all likely events during the War in the Netherlands. Three horsemen go off at their hardest to carry the good news, two horses drop dead on the way, and the hero was the good steed Roland, who was voted the last measure of meal left in the city.

Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr.— This poem describes an incident in the French War with Algeria in 1842. Abd-el-Kadr was an Arab

chief who resisted the French. The metre imitates the movements of the horse traversing the desert.

Nationality in Drinks.—A fanciful comparison of the merits of claret, tokay and beer.

Garden Fancies.—1. THE FLOWER'S NAME. A lover visits a garden and recalls the soft Spanish name his mistress gave a flower. 2. SIBRANDUS SCHAFNABURGENSIS. In another garden a man reads a pedant's book and casts it into a hollow tree to rot with congenial fungi, but some time after he repented of his unkindness to the volume, fished it up, and restored it to his shelves.

Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister.—Anger may dwell even in heavenly minds, and hate, as this poem shows, may find a home under the religious habit. A brutal monk, jealous of one of his gentler natured brethren, maliciously destroys his cherished flowers, will even venture to slip in amongst his greengages a wicked French novel, and endeavours to make him a heretic by tripping him up in his theology.

The Laboratory.—This is another study of hate. A jealous woman is impelled to murder her rival. The heroine gloats over the possession of a deadly poison, for which she has paid the mediæval chemist heavily. The scene is laid in a laboratory, the apparatus of which is very faithfully described. The old poisons were mostly preparations of arsenic.

The Confessional (Spain).— During the period of the Spanish Inquisition, a girl, at the instigation of her confessor, extorts from her lover the fact of his complicity in matters injurious to the Church. This is communicated to the priest, with the effect

that her lover is executed in her sight, whilst she is imprisoned for her passionate denunciation of the treachery.

Cristina.—The lady of the poem is Maria Christina, of Naples. Born in 1806, she was married in 1829 to Ferdinand VII, King of Spain. The poem is based on the fact that a young man, who had been accorded some notice from this royal coquette, and had loved her, became insane in consequence of her heartless treatment of him. The passion of love in Browning's work is treated as the most sacred thing in the human soul. The man or woman who trifles with love destroys this most precious faculty. The flirt and coquette are the losers; the forsaken one has saved his own soul and gained the other's as well. This is one of life's great ironies.

The Lost Mistress describes the resignation of a great love in a spirit of sacrifice by a man who has perfect control over himself. The woman's voice will stay in his soul for ever, yet she must be to him but a mere friend.

Earth's Immortalities.—They are Fame and Love. But the poet's tomb is covered with lichen, soon to blot out his name and date, and the June fever of passion is quenched by the shower at the end of the year.

Meeting at Night and Parting at Morning.—Home gives love, and the tasks of life amid the world of men maintain it. Love and work are complementary blessings.

Song.—A lover demands admiration for his lady even from those who do not love her.

A Woman's Last Word.—Perfect love requires

no words ; love is the only truth. Logic chills—the absolute sacrifice of self must be made on the altar of love.

Evelyn Hope.—Is the soliloquy of a man who loved a girl of sixteen. She died too young for her time to love, and the man was thrice as old. Is it too late, then ? Not so, he says, God creates the love to reward the love. His love will not be lost. No atom ever perishes. He can wait. In worlds to come he will be more worthy of her, and she will understand. The atoms shall not mock the evanescence of human love.

Love Among the Ruins.—The scene is evening in the Roman Campagna, amid the ruins of cities once great and famous. Musing on the evanescence of all human things, the lover meets the girl with eager eyes and yellow hair, in whose embrace he recognizes that the triumphs and glories of the past are as nothing to the love that is best of all that earth has to give. With Browning love is for ever.

A Lovers' Quarrel.—"A shaft from the devil's bow"—a bitter word—has divided the lovers. Hearts can do without each other in lovely summer. "Well," says the man, "winter will come, and then I shall have her for evermore."

Up at a Villa—Down in the City.—A poor Italian gentleman loves city life, but cannot afford it. Compelled to live at a villa on the mountain side, he is horribly bored—the life is no better than a beast's. He hates fire-flies and bees, everything that the poets extol. What he longs for is the bustle and crowd of city life. "Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life !"

A Toccata of Galuppi's.—A Toccata is a prelude or touch-piece. Galuppi was a composer of the eighteenth century. The poem deals with the decadent Venetians, the mere pleasure-seekers, and the scientists with their researches ; frivolous lives they all lived ; heard the dreamy music which told them they must die, but went on dancing and idling—or knowledge-seeking, without real consecration to science, till death "took them where they never see the sun."

Old Pictures in Florence.—The poet contemplates the city of Florence from a hill overlooking it. He recalls the ancient masters whose pictures adorn the churches and cloisters of the famous town where they lived and worked. The world forgets its benefactors, the great frescoes are neglected and decaying. As the artists are safe in heaven, perhaps they do not care. He reflects on the development of the artist. Greek art created man anew in marble ; it taught us the perfection of the body ; but one day the painters awoke to the beauty of the soul, and then they worked for eternity as the Greeks worked for time. There was arrest in Greek art, the body could develop no further ; for the soul-painters there could be no arrest, for the soul eternally develops, and some tell us when this life is over we shall enter on a succession of lives where we shall repeat in large what here we practise in little. For the poet, however, he asks for rest ; he thinks he has learned his lesson here. Vasari's "Lives of the Painters" should be read in connection with the lives of the artists mentioned in this poem.

"**De Gustibus—.**"—A pretty English lane in summer is compared with a noble landscape in the Apennines. The poet says when his life is over—

> Open my heart and you will see
> Graved inside of it, "Italy."

Browning has very little to say in his poems about English scenery.

Home-Thoughts, from Abroad.—A lovely little poem in praise of English birds and flowers in April and May ; full of yearning for home.

Home-Thoughts, from the Sea.—Sailing past Trafalgar's Bay, with Gibraltar in the distance, the poet in patriotic fervour cries, "Here and here did England help me ; how can I help England ?"

Saul.—This is perhaps the grandest and most beautiful of all Browning's religious poems. It is founded on the incident in the life of David when he was sent for to cure by his music the mental derangement of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 14–23). The influence of music in curing diseases of the mind was well understood by the ancients. Saul, in the mental pathology of the Hebrews, was supposed to be suffering from the influence of "an evil spirit from the Lord," and David's music was expected to exorcise it. The well-known influence of music on the lower animals is noticed in the poem. David took his harp and began playing the tune all the sheep knew, thus appealing to Saul's mere animal nature. Then he played the tune the snails and crickets love, for even they, as St. Francis of Assisi knew, are our brothers and sisters, and there is sympathy be-

tween us all. David advanced his theme; he played the help-tune of the reapers, trying to expand his heart in the warmth of brotherliness. But higher yet! The march of the honoured dead is played—the praise of the men whose faults are forgotten in the work of the men completed. Then came the marriage chant—the march, too, of the comradeship of man. Still nobler strains when the priests ascend the altar steps and offer sacrifice to God. And then by slow degrees the music began to do its work. The song went forward from the wild joys of living to the stimulating thought of high ambition concentrated in Saul, King of Israel. Saul was "released and aware." In a magnificent prophetic burst the Incarnation of Christ is foretold.

My Star.—Where the astronomer sees a world the poet sees the iridescent glory of prismatic colours. The scientist's world has a soul which it has opened to him. The poem was probably a tribute to Mrs. Browning.

By the Fire-Side.—The poem is a confession of the poet's love for his wife. "Whom else," he asks her, "dare he look backward for, or dare pursue the path grey heads abhor?" Her love for him and his for her have so influenced his spiritual development, that in the memory of this irrevocable union he can approach the bounds of life undaunted.

Any Wife to Any Husband.—A dying wife is disturbed by the thought that her husband will not be faithful to her memory when she leaves him. He is weak, and though he will not cease to love her and cherish her memory, soul-love

will not hinder the flesh-love that will intrude its presence. She will take her jealousy to another world.

Two in the Campagna.—Expresses "the pain of finite hearts that yearn." Human love is but the faint shadow of the Divine. Love, the best thing the world has to offer mortals, can only ease the pain of the yearning heart when it is heaven-born. The poem expresses Browning's passion for the permanent.

> Must I go
> Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
> Onward, whenever light winds blow,
> Fixed by no friendly star ?

Misconceptions.—A bird rests for a moment on a branch which straightway for its joy bursts into blossom. A queen leant on a heart for a moment ere she rested regally. Even so the poor heart had fancy ecstatic.

A Serenade at the Villa.—On a sultry summer night a lover serenades his lady, but as her villa was dark and her window fast he turns bitterly away, while she sleeps undisturbed alike by the thunder and his music.

One Way of Love.—In this poem, unrequited love and defeat accepted with dignity are charmingly expressed.

Another Way of Love is a companion poem to the above. The woman in the first poem does not notice the roses offered her ; in the second it is the man who is weary of the flowers; but the lady does bear the neglect with the dignity and composure of the man in "One Way of Love."

A Pretty Woman.—Is it not enough for a woman

who is simply a beauty to be that and nothing more? The best way to grace a rose is to leave it; not gather it, smell it, kiss it, wear it, and then throw it away. The world needs the pretty woman. "Beauty is an end in itself."

Respectability.—The world will let us do just what we like, provided only we take out its licence. Everything depends on the Government mark the Custom-house officers chalk on our baggage.

Love in a Life describes a lover searching for his love, but never overtaking her.

Life in a Love tells how the man recognizes his failure, yet persists in devoting his life to the pursuit. The poem seems to emphasize the fact that our ideals always evade us, yet life cannot be better spent than in devotion to one worthy ideal.

In Three Days.—The eager expectation of a lover for a meeting with his love. But one may suggest that much may happen of ill in three days. But the fear shall perish in scorn.

In a Year.—An inconstant lover breaks a faithful woman's heart. The man asks, "Can't we touch these bubbles, then, but they break?" Crumble the human heart, "and what comes next? Is it God?"

Women and Roses.—A dream of three roses. Round the faded first rose float the dead women of the poet's pages. Round the perfect second rose follow the living—loving, loved women of to-day; and in the rear round the bud hover the multitude of beauties yet unborn. "Which is the dearest rose to me?"

Before and After.—That is, before and after a

duel. Two men have quarrelled, and it is impossible to say which of them is the injured and which the injurer. "Let them fight it out," says a philosophical adviser; if the guilty man is killed atonement will have been made, if the injured man falls "he gives his blow at last and gets his heaven." Wrong must be resisted while God's champion lives.

The fight is over, the guilty is slain; now comes the reaction: the passion for revenge gives place to the conviction that forgiveness had been better. In the victory was the defeat.

The Guardian Angel.—Standing before Guercino's picture of the Angel at Fano who is teaching a child to pray, the poet begs that the Angel would also teach him to pray.

The "Alfred" mentioned in verse 6 was Mr. Alfred Domett, concerning whom the poem "Waring" was written.

Memorabilia.—Crossing a moor, a blankness of miles, a man picks up an eagle's feather. Another once saw Shelley plain, and spoke to him. The feather redeemed the moor; the memory of Shelley glorified the whole life of the other. Some of us can say this of Robert Browning.

Popularity.—This poem is a tribute to Keats. As the fisherman on Tyrian seas takes therefrom the purple dye by which kings' houses shall be made glorious while the fisherman is left in poverty, so was Keats neglected while he taught men to paint their ideas in glowing word-tints and images luxuriant. The murex of verse 13 means the genus of molluscs from which the Tyrian purple dye was obtained.

Master Hughes of Saxe-Gotha.—An imaginary composer is questioned by an organist as to the meaning of the melody which *flies* (hence called a *fugue*) from one part to another. These old compositions were mountainous in their structure, one idea being piled upon another till all meaning was lost in cloudland. So we, with our pretences, shams, and subterfuges, have all but obliterated God's gold which Truth and Nature are ever trying to make clear to us. Palestrina emancipated music from the trammels of pedantry just as Pascal swept away by clear-sighted common-sense the casuistry of Escobar. The Danaides in verse 16 were the daughters of Danaus, who were condemned for their crimes to pour water for ever, in the regions below, into a vessel with holes in the bottom.

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES.

(1843.)

The Return of the Druses: A Tragedy.—The Syrian Druses occupy the mountainous region of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. They are an exceedingly mysterious, uncommunicative people, who never disclose the secrets of their religion, which is said to have been taught, at the early part of the eleventh century, by one who called himself Hakeem Biamrallah.

Browning's drama does not appear to be founded on any historical facts. The time occupied by the tragedy is one day. Djabal is an initiated Druse whose family was massacred in the island which is the scene of the drama. This island, of the

southern Sporades, was colonized by the Lebanon Druses and garrisoned by the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes. Djabal has felt within him a Divine call to free the land from its oppressors.

The tragedy opens with the deliberations of the Druse initiates, who are expecting the manifestation of a Divine liberator—the Hakeem. The governor of the island is a cruel and oppressive master, and Djabal has decided that he shall be slain. He has secured the alliance of the Venetians, who have promised that a fleet of their ships shall be prepared to transport the Druses to their home in the Lebanon, and shall be in readiness to receive them when the murder of the prefect shall have liberated his countrymen. The complicated part of the story now begins. A Druse maiden, Anael, is devoted to her people, and has vowed to wed no one but their liberator. That he may win her, Djabal declares himself to be the Hakeem incarnate for the salvation of the Druses. Anael and her tribe believe him. He has decreed the death of the tyrant, and Anael knows this. Djabal is her god as well as her lover, yet she cannot worship him as divine. Djabal half believes in the sanctity of his mission, but his heart at last fails him, and he determines to fly after killing the prefect.

On his way to the tyrant's chamber he meets Anael, and learns from her that she has slain the prefect. Djabal then confesses everything to her. At first she refuses to believe in his falseness, but even when convinced of the truth of the matter, will not cast him from her heart. She loves him more as man than as god; he is less remote. They

now discover that the murder need not have been committed. Lois de Dreux, a postulant of the order of knighthood, whom Djabal had met in Europe, has fallen in love with Anael and aspired to win her. Lois has represented to the Chapter of the Order the evil character of the prefect, and has obtained an order for his removal.

The young knight is appointed his successor, so that the liberation of the Druses is now at hand. Anael urges Djabal to own his imposition to his people. He refuses. She cannot forgive him, and so denounces him to the European rulers of the island, who bring him to trial. His accuser is Anael ; his life hangs upon her words. He urges her to speak them, but this she cannot do. Djabal is now man only ; his glory as a divine being she could not share, she can at least be united with him in his disgrace. All her love for him is awakened, and she hails him, "Hakeem!" and falls dead at his feet. The man has conquered the god. Djabal, committing the care of the Druses to his friend Lois, and bidding him guard his people home again and win their blessing for the deed, stabs himself as he bends over the body of the faithful Anael.

As he dies the Venetians enter and plant the Lion of St. Mark. Djabal's last cry mingles with their shouts, "On to the mountain! At the mountain, Druses!"

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.

(1843.)

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon: A Tragedy.—A

simple though highly dramatic story. Thorold, Earl Tresham, is a monomaniac to family pride; his ancestry and his own reputation absorb his thoughts, and the wreck of the universe were to him a less evil than a stain on the family honour. His only sister, Mildred Tresham, an orphan, has in her innocence allowed herself to be seduced by Henry, Earl Mertoun, whose estates join those of the Treshams. He could have lawfully possessed the girl he loved had he not been afraid of the proud brother, and had had courage to ask her in marriage. At last, anxious to repair the wrong, he formally presents himself as the girl's lover. The Earl sees no objection to the marriage and makes none. But the difficulty was not over. Gerard, an old and faithful retainer, has seen a man, night after night, climb to the lady's chamber. Having no idea who the visitor might be, he tells his master the facts. Thorold, in the utmost mental distress, questions his sister, who denies nothing. She refuses to say who her lover is, and, stranger still, will not agree to dismiss Mertoun.

At midnight Tresham sees the lover, whom he does not recognize, prepare to mount to his sister's room. They fight, and the Earl falls mortally wounded. Tresham bursts into his sister's room; she sees that he has killed Mertoun, and also that he is himself dying of the poison he has swallowed. Her heart is broken, and she dies. Guendolen, the cousin of Mildred, had seen how matters stood, and would have rectified them had it not been rendered impossible by the adventure in the ground when the unhappy young Earl allowed Thorold to kill him.

The tragedy has been performed on several occasions by distinguished actors, but is too analytical to become popular.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

(1844.)

Colombe's Birthday: A Play.—An imaginary historical play. Colombe, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves, is in danger of losing her sovereignty by the operation of the Salic Law. Prince Berthold could have dispossessed her, but, to smooth matters, offers her marriage, not even pretending to love her. Colombe loves Valence, an advocate, and he loves her. So, at the shrine of love, she sacrifices a throne.

DRAMATIC ROMANCES.

(184- 185-.)

Incident of the French Camp.—After the storming of Ratisbon, a messenger rode to Napoleon with the news that the city had surrendered. "You're wounded!" said the Emperor. "Nay, I'm killed, Sire!" said the boy as he fell dead.

The Patriot.—A patriot, recently the idol of the people, has fallen from his pedestal and is being led to execution. Through a hail of pelting stones he goes to his death, but feels safe in that God will repay.

My Last Duchess—Ferrara.—A haughty Italian nobleman is showing his picture gallery to a Count whose daughter he is about to marry. Standing before the picture of his last Duchess (he was a widower) he explains that she was wont to smile, not only on her husband, but on every one, she was so soon made glad. So he "gave commands," and "then all smiles stopped together." The concentrated tragedy of these words show that Browning was an impressionist before the French movement began. The noble widower discusses the question of the dowry he is to receive with the lady who is to succeed his last duchess.

Count Gismond.—A tale of the ordeal by battle. A false knight slanders the queen of a tournament.

A strange knight fights with the slanderer and kills him, and then marries the lady.

The Boy and the Angel emphasizes our duty to be content to serve God in that state of life unto which it has pleased Him to call us. A boy desired to be Pope, that he might more fitly praise God. Gabriel took the lad's place, and Theocrite became Pope; but God missed the lad's "little human praise," although an angel was his substitute. The change was vain for both. Theocrite had to go—

> Back to the cell and poor employ:
> Resume the craftsman and the boy!

Instans Tyrannus—"The Threatening Tyrant."—A king desired to crush a defenceless man, when, just as he had him in his power, the man appealed to God; then the king was afraid. The title of the poem was suggested by Horace's "Ode on the Just Man."

Mesmerism.—By will-power a hypnotist influences a woman to come to him through a storm. In due time she enters. The mesmerist, alarmed at his own power, prays that he may not abuse it.

The Glove.—The old story of the lady who threw her glove into a lion's cage that her lover might venture to rescue it. The lover dared the feat, and then flung the glove in her face. Browning, in opposition to every one else, justifies the woman, who, doubting her lover's courage, rightly put it to the test. De Lorge married a lady of the Court who kept him busy fetching "straying sad gloves she was always mislaying."

Time's Revenges.—"The corruption of the best is the worst" says the Latin proverb. Browning

seldom paints a woman wholly bad as in this poem. A man is prepared to sacrifice body, soul, all that he holds most dear, for a woman who would roast him before a slow fire for a coveted ball-ticket. He has a friend whom he treats with indifference who would do anything in the world for him.

The Italian in England.—An Italian patriot, hunted by the Austrians, hides in an old aqueduct for three days. At last, when nearly starved to death, he is seen, fed, and rescued by a peasant girl, who, had she betrayed him, would have earned the price set upon his head. Reaching England, he remembers with gratitude the woman in the dear lost land who had saved him. He lives to labour for his country.

The Englishman in Italy is a poem descriptive of the Plain of Sorrento and the Bay of Naples. The landscape is so perfectly painted that it needs only to understand a few words of local import to imagine the whole lovely scene. The scirocco is the south-east wind.

Quails are caught in great numbers here in curious nets arranged to catch them as they fly. "Frails" are shallow baskets. "Pink and yellow jellies" refer to the cuttle fish, sea-urchins and other "frutti di mare" (fruits of the sea) considered delicacies by the Neapolitans. The lentisks are the mastic trees. "Regales" are entertainments.

The "Isles of the siren, your Galli" lie off the Cape of Minerva. Macaroni of various kinds is made here. The fruits most abundant are olives, grapes, figs, prickly pears, oranges and lemons.

The "Feast of the Rosary" is the first Sunday

of October. It commemorates the destruction of the Turkish fleet at the battle of Lepanto by the Catholic powers of Europe on October 7, 1571.

In a Gondola.—A lover sings in a gondola to his mistress, who accompanies him, conscious but both regardless of their danger. The time is precious, the interview is a stolen one, and the lover is stabbed as he hands the lady ashore. He craves one more kiss and dies content. "I have lived indeed!"

Waring tells how Browning's friend, Mr. Alfred Domett, suddenly disappeared, having shaken off, without a word to his friends, the restraints of conventional life, and vanished into the unknown.

The Twins.—"Give" and "It shall be given to you," a story from Luther's "Table Talk." Thrust out *date* (give) and the other *dabitur* (it shall be given to you) will go away of himself.

A Light Woman.—A question of a stronger soul in a matter of love. A woman ensnares a man just to add to her many conquests. The man has a friend who feels equal to conquering her. The game is a serious one, for, while the man merely pretends to love the woman, she recognizes her master at the game and really loves him. The poem shows how awkward a thing it is to play with souls.

The Last Ride Together.—A rejected lover has a final interview with his love. The concentration of the dramatic intensity of the poem is tremendous. The decrees of fate are loyally complied with. They ride. He thinks, What if for ever he ride on with her as now, "The instant made eternity?"

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.—The story of the piper who by his potent music cleared the village of Hamelin of the rats for a stipulated fee by making them follow him to the river, where they were drowned. When the town refused to pay the agreed amount, the piper played a still more powerful melody, which drew all the children of the place into a cavern in the mountain side, where they were all entombed alive.

The Flight of the Duchess.—A mysterious story, dramatically told in a peculiarly fascinating manner by an old huntsman who has spent his life in the service of a Duke and his mother at their castle in a land which is an appanage of the German Kaiser. The Duke is a monomaniac for mediæval customs; his young wife is chilled by neglect and visibly pines away. The Duke arranged a great hunting party, and as he rode down the valley he met a troop of gipsies, and an old witch of the party came forth to greet the huntsmen. She begs to be allowed to pay her respects to the Duchess, who was left behind in the castle. The Duke seizes the opportunity as a means of frightening his wife and making her more submissive, and the crone is admitted; she is transfigured in the presence of the Duchess, and tells her that she has discovered she is of their race by infallible signs. Having bewitched her and the retainer, the gipsy carries off the Duchess, who rides on her palfrey with the crone, and is heard of no more.

A Grammarian's Funeral: Shortly after the Revival of Learning in Europe.—A company of the grammarian's disciples are bearing his coffin for burial on a mountain top. He had in youth been

seized by the spirit of the New Learning, and had consecrated his natural advantages of mind and body to its progress, and in his eagerness to eat up the plant of learning had become cramped and withered. Before living he would learn how to live, and so deeper he bent over his books and let the body decay so uncared for that even in the death-struggle he "ground at grammar." When the end came they laid him where the

> Lightnings are loosened,
> Stars come and go!

The Heretic's Tragedy: A Middle-Age Interlude. —(It would seem to be a glimpse from the burning of Jacques du Bourg-Molay at Paris, A.D. 1314; as distorted by the reflection from Flemish brain to brain during the course of a couple of centuries.) Molay was Grand Master of the Order of the Knights Templars, suppressed by a decree of Pope Clement V in 1312. They were accused of treasons and conspiracies with the infidels. The year following Molay was burnt at Paris, and several others suffered death, though they all with their latest breath protested their innocence of the crimes laid to their charge.

Holy Cross Day.—On which the Jews were forced to attend an Annual Christian Sermon in Rome. On the Festival of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which falls annually on September 14, it was long the custom in Rome to compel the Jews to hear sermons at the church of "St. Angelo in Pescheria," close to the Ghetto. The bad business has now been abolished.

Protus.—There is no historical foundation for

this poem. A blacksmith's son, named John the Pannonian, in the declining years of the Roman Empire usurps the throne of the baby Emperor Protus, who is the idol of the people.

The Statue and the Bust.—The story of the poem, which is partly founded on fact and partly legendary, is concerned with the Riccardi Palace in Florence and the Grand Duke Ferdinand the First, who was smitten with the charms of the bride whom the head of the house of Riccardi had just brought home. Her husband noticed or heard something which induced him to make his lady a prisoner in her chamber, whose door was then closed till the body should be removed for burial. But she could watch the world from the window, and it sufficed, for she thought she could fly to the Duke who loved her. The Duke tried various stratagems to gain possession of the lady, but each day some obstacle hindered their flight. The weeks grew months, and the years passed till age crept on. Della Robbia was ordered to make her a bust on her window waiting for her lover to pass, and the Duke set John of Douay to make an equestrian statue of him and place it in the square looking straight at the window where the lady had placed the bust. And so these two await the Last Judgment. The moral of the poem is the weakness and folly of indecision. The lovers played their game neither with boldness nor with skill.

Porphyria's Lover.—In a paroxysm of love-madness a man murders a woman—who has unlawfully given herself to him—that she may be his unalterably because dead. The man says, "And yet God has not said a word!"

"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came."—This is the story of a knight who has undertaken a pilgrimage to a certain dark tower, the way to which was full of difficulties and dangers, and the right road quite unknown to the seeker. His predecessors had all failed; he himself is soon in despair, but is impelled to go on. The landscape was all dark and desolate; a noise was everywhere, a tolling like that of a bell; he could hear the names of the lost adventurers as he was confronted suddenly by the round, squat turret, yet dauntless he set the horn to his lips and blew, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." At the head of the poem is a note, "See Edgar's song in *Lear*." Browning wrote "Childe Roland" one day in Paris as a vivid picture suggested by Edgar's life; the horse was suggested by the figure of a red horse in a piece of tapestry in Browning's house. The poem is not an allegory, nor has it any hidden meaning, though we may fairly perhaps read into it more than the poet had in his mind when he wrote it.

LURIA.

(1846.)

Luria: A Tragedy. Time 14—.—The drama deals with the wars between different Italian cities during the period of the constant struggles between the Guelf and Ghibelline factions. One of the most important of these internecine efforts for supremacy was the war between the Florentine

and the Pisan republics. The play has for its object to show how Pisa fell under the dominion of its powerful rival. The characters are Luria, a Moorish commander of the Florentine forces; Husain, a Moor, his friend; Puccio, the old Florentine commander, now Luria's chief officer; Braccio, commissary of the republic of Florence; Jacopo, his secretary; Tiburzio, commander of the Pisans; and Domizia, a noble Florentine lady. The scene is Luria's camp, between Florence and Pisa. The time extends only over one day. Luria is Browning's Othello, and one of his noblest characters—a simple, honest man wholly devoted to the interests of Florence. On the eve of a battle he learns that the Florentines have invented a charge of treachery, because they feared they would have to reward the victorious general, or that he might use his power and influence with the people to become master of their city. They set spies and wove their toils, aided by the displaced Puccio, who would naturally be discontented; so that by the time Luria had won their battle for them his death sentence will be pronounced. He heard the news from Tiburzio, the Pisan general, who endeavoured to win him to his side and so punish Florence. But the noble Luria thanks Tiburzio, dismisses him, and then reflects, he has it in his power to ruin Florence, but would it console him that his Florentines walked with a sadder step? He has but one way of escape left him. He has brought poison from his own land for use in such an emergency as this; he drinks—

> Florence is saved; I drink this, and ere night,—die!

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

(1846.)

A Soul's Tragedy.—The title is ironical, for in this play we have no tragedy, and very little "soul." The hero is Chiappino, a "patriot" in braggadocio and fine sentiments, who has fomented popular feeling against the Provost of Faenza, and has been sentenced to exile. His friend Luitolfo has influence with the Provost, and has volunteered to exert it on Chiappino's behalf with the view of obtaining a pardon. The first Act is termed the poetry of Chiappino's life, the second Act its prose. The story opens with a dialogue between Eulalia and Chiappino in Luitolfo's house. They discuss the reason for Luitolfo's prolonged absence on his errand of intercession with the Provost. Luitolfo and Eulalia are betrothed lovers. Chiappino, while his friend endeavours to save him, is running him down while making love to Eulalia. Chiappino hates Luitolfo for the favours he has done him; he tries to make himself important in the woman's eyes, poses as the martyr of humanity, and makes light of the favours bestowed upon him. While they talk Luitolfo rushes in with blood upon him. He declares that he has killed the Provost, and that the crowd are in pursuit of him. Chiappino forces Luitolfo to fly in his disguise, gives him his passport, and brags that he will protect Eulalia and meet the angry pursuers.

The people enter, and Chiappino, seeing that they are friendly, declares it was he who killed the Provost, and so takes the credit of Luitolfo's act

of vengeance. As the murder is so popular, Eulalia desires that her lover should have the credit of it, but Chiappino defers the explanation. Act II is the prose—the scene is the market-place a month later. Luitolfo in disguise mingles with the people outside the Provost's palace. One of them tells him that Chiappino is to be the next Provost, that he is the people's friend, that Luitolfo is a coward who ran away and deserted their cause. The Papal legate, Ogniben, has entered the town and wishes to know what the people want. The soldiers come into Ravenna bearing the wounded Provost (he had not been killed), and it was desired to arrange matters amicably.

Chiappino declares that he desires a republic. The Legate asks, "And you the administrator thereof?" Chiappino assents. The clever and satirical ecclesiastic sets a trap for the pretended patriot. He tells the people that Chiappino shall be Provost when the name of the would-be murderer is given up. Luitolfo stands forward and justifies his act, and so puts Chiappino to confusion. The Legate orders Luitolfo to his house, and advises the patriot to rusticate himself awhile. He then demands the keys of the Provost's palace, and advising profitable meditation to the people, he leaves them chuckling at his manner of dealing with leaders of revolts.

CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY.

(1850.)

Christmas-Eve.—These two poems are inde-

pendent of one another, though both have for their subject a vision of Christ, and deal with religious questions in a manner which reveals to us much of the poet's attitude towards Christianity and his own religious convictions. The scene of the poem "Christmas Eve" is a country dissenting chapel near a common. It is Sunday night, and the eve of the Feast of the Nativity. The weather is stormy, and the members of the congregation, very humorously described, have gathered in their coarse, dirty and wet garments to hear a bigoted preaching-man pour forth in his immense stupidity "full measure to meet his audience's avidity." A stranger to the sect, a Gallio, "a carer for none of it," soon has enough of it, and flings out of the place in disgust.

As he passes into the fresh air he finds there is a lull in the wind and rain. The moon was up, and he is glad to be in communion with his own church as a worshipper of God in Nature. He had learned to recognize Him in the immensities, and with the power had found His love the nobler dower. In this way he would seek to press towards God; let men seek Him in a narrow shrine if they would. And, as he mused, the storm had ceased; a moon rainbow, vast and perfect, rose in its chorded colours. With terror he beheld Christ, the back of Him—no more. He had been present in that poor chapel as the friend of the mean worshippers. He with His sweeping vestment, vast and white, whose hem the awed beholder could just recognize.

Clinging to the salvation of His vesture he saw

for a moment the white face of the Lord, and was caught up in the whirl of the robe, up-borne over the world till they stopped at the great dome of God, St. Peter's Church at Rome. The whole basilica was filled with worshippers this Christmas Eve. Christ enters ; the Nature worshipper was left outside the door—

> Left till He return, alone
> Save for the garment's extreme fold
> Abandoned still to bless my hold.

He realized that although to him Rome's teaching was obscured by errors and perversities, the love of the Crucified One was there, and " Love was the all-sufficient law."

Again he is caught up in the vesture's fold, and transferred this time to a lecture-hall in a University town in Germany, where an agnostic lecturer is discoursing on the " Christ Myth." He was discussing whether there ever was a Christ or not, when the Saviour entered the place, but He would not bid his companion trust himself within " the exhausted air-bell of the critic." The professor rejects Christ as Christians know Him. Where Papist and Dissenter struggle the air may become mephitic ; but the German left no air to poison at all. Yet he retains something. Is it Christ's intellect that he must reverence ? But sages had taught his religion before. Are we to worship Him for His goodness ? Goodness is due from man to man, still more to God, and does not confer on its possessor the right to rule the race.

And during all the argument Christ was present. The professor had pounded the pearl of price to dust, yet he does not cast it away; he bids his

hearers cherish the precious residue and venerate the myth. Then the storm began afresh, and the black night caught him. Christ was gone, the vesture fast receding; he caught at it, and, once more lapped in its fold, was in the little chapel. The preacher had reached "tenthly and lastly"; it was all crude and ungrammatical—in a word, the water of life was being dispensed with a strong taste of the soil in a poor earthen vessel. Yet it *was* the water of life; the listener will criticize no more.

Easter-Day.—The poem is a dialogue. The first speaker exclaims, "How very hard it is to be a Christian!" We do not see the difficulty at the beginning of the race; "as we proceed it shifts its place." The second speaker says, "Of course the chief difficulty is belief." If once we can thoroughly believe, the rest is easy, even martyrdom itself. Faith may be God's touchstone. We desire that God should geometrise, that religion should be based on exacter laws. The first speaker says, "You would grow as a tree, stand as a rock, be above faith. We have to make our music out of creation's groans." The second speaker admits that a scientific faith is absurd; but we may require probability at least. Men sacrifice their pleasures to collect beetles or snuff-boxes; they have some certainty to inspire them. The Christian has evidence of a sort; if once in the believing mood the giving up of pleasures adds a spice to life. The believer gets hope, blind hopes wherewith to flavour life, that is all. The speaker proceeds to tell how one Easter night he was crossing the common near the chapel (spoken of in "Christmas

Eve") when he was led to ask himself how would it be with him were he to fall dead that moment—would he die faithful or faithless? He had always desired to know the worst of everything. "Common-sense" told him he had nothing to fear, for was he not a Christian? Then he had this vision. He saw written in lines of fire across the sky, "Burn it!" The whole earth and heaven were lit with the flames of the Judgment Day. In a moment his naked soul stood before the Seat of Judgment—all his disguises, all his trifling with conscience stripped away. Life was done. Christ stood before him, told him that as he had deliberately chosen the world it should be his for ever; for ever keep the partial beauty for which he had struggled. Then he saw his error, and asked for Art in place of Nature. This too was conceded, and at once he saw that earth can only serve earth's ends, it was insufficient for eternity; and he cried in anguish, "Mind is best—I will seize mind—forego the rest!" But it was answered that the best of mind on earth and all its endowments were God's part, and in no wise to be considered an interest in the mind of man; losing God, he loses His inspirations. Then he prays for love alone, and God said, "Take the show of love for the name's sake; but remember who created thee to love, died for love of thee, and thou didst refuse to believe the story, on the ground that the love was too much."

Now the man saw the whole truth of God, and cried, "Thou Love of God! Let me not know that all is lost! Let me go on hoping to reach one eve the Better Land!" And he awoke, rejoicing

that he was not left apart in God's contempt; thanking God that it *is* hard to be a Christian, and that he is not condemned to earth and rage for ever.

In these poems, "Christmas-Eve" and "Easter-Day," we have the essence of Browning's Christian teaching. We shall meet again and again in this brief sketch of his works incontrovertible proofs that Robert Browning was not a prophet of theism merely, but was a firm believer in Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour of mankind. This fact is so frequently obscured or altogether ignored by many commentators on the poet's works, that it is necessary to state it categorically.

MEN AND WOMEN.

(184– 185–.)

"Transcendentalism: A Poem in Twelve Books."—An imaginary title, there is no such work. A critic of poetry says—

> Stop playing, poet! May a brother speak?
> 'Tis you speak, that's your error. Song's our art;
> Whereas you please to speak these naked thoughts
> Instead of draping them in sights and sounds.

These lines sum up the whole controversy about Browning's work. The young demand luxuriant imagery, the old need philosophy. It is, on the contrary, maintained that it is the other way about. Jacob Boehme was a great mystic of the seventeenth century. John of Halberstadt was a magician. One day the magic of poetry suffused the soul of Boehme, and imagination glorified his

life. The magic of John of Halberstadt created the world anew for him.

How it Strikes a Contemporary.—A poet of Valladolid was mistaken by the mob for an agent of the Government because he was observed to take such notice of things. Putting this and that together, they felt convinced that A's surprising fate and B's disappearance were traceable to this espionage.

Artemis Prologizes.—Diana revived Hippolytus by the aid of Æsculapius when he was slain at the instigation of Venus, who was enraged at his neglect of her and by his devotion to Diana. The chaste goddess nursed her friend back to life. The poet has adopted the Greek spelling of proper names—thus *Asclepios* for *Æsculapius*, *Phoibus* for *Phœbus*. *Artemis* is the Greek name of Diana, *Aphrodite* is the Greek name of *Venus; Poseidon* is *Neptune*, *Heré* is *Juno*, Queen of Heaven; *Athenai* is *Minerva*.

An Epistle containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician. — A wandering scholar-physician, living in the time of our Lord, writes to his old teacher Abib, giving an account of certain matters of interest which he has discovered in the course of his travels. He tells him of some rare drugs, and sends him samples of remedies which he has collected in Palestine, and says that in his journeyings he came to Jericho, on the dangerous road from which city to Jerusalem he had met with sundry misadventures, and had noted cases of clinical interest which he reports in approved medical phrase. Amongst these he mentions "a case of mania," complicated by

trance and epilepsy ; the diagnosis he understands perfectly, but it was the cure which puzzled him. " Some spell, exorcisation or trick of art " had evidently been employed by a Nazarene physician of the patient's tribe, who bade him, when he seemed dead, " Rise ! " and he did rise. He was " one Lazarus a Jew "—of good habit of body, and his three days' sleep in the tomb had effected such a change in him that he eyes the world now like a child, and puts all his old joys in the dust. Losing all sense of proportion, he views a great armament or a mule-load of gourds as all the same to him, whilst some trifle will appear of infinite import. He desires only to please God. The physician would have liked to meet the Nazarene, and to have held a consultation with him on the case, but he discovered that he perished in a tumult many years previously, accused of wizardry, rebellion, and of holding a prodigious creed.

Lazarus, he says, regards his restorer as God the Creator and Sustainer of the world, who dwelt in flesh amongst us for awhile. But why write of trivial matters ? He has discovered a blue-flowering borage, very nitrous, on the margin of a pool. But he cannot close his letter without returning to the tremendous suggestion once more. " Think, Abib ! The very God ! "

> So, the All-Great, were the All-loving too —
> It is strange.

This wonderful poem is one of Browning's most remarkable and suggestive psychological studies.

Johannes Agricola in Meditation.—Johannes Agricola was the founder of the sect of Antinomians, and his tenets to some extent are held by

W. E. CUMMER,

Hyper-Calvinists to-day. Elect persons "predestined to be saved" cannot be unsaved by anything they can do. As a corollary, those souls who are not elect may be as holy in the sight of men as the saints of God, yet they were eternally foreordained to be lost before the world began. Agricola was a friend of Luther. Mosheim, in his "Ecclesiastical History," Century XVII, sect. ii. part ii. chap. ii. 23, describes his teaching.

Pictor Ignotus.—An unknown painter is terrified to think of his works dragged forth to be bought and sold as household stuff, to have to live with people sunk in their daily pettiness, and to have his work discussed by unappreciative prattlers. He did not want the mob's applause; he shrank from the appreciations of thoughtless folk as a nun would shrink from the compliments of a band of rough soldiery. But he was not a genius. Had he been, he could not have refrained from enchanting the world with his work. Vasari says that the Borgo Allegri at Florence took its name from the joy of the inhabitants when a Madonna by Cimabue was carried through it in procession.

Fra Lippo Lippi.—This famous painter was the son of a butcher in Florence. He lived 1412–69, and was, while a baby, left an orphan in the care of his aunt, Monna Lapaccia, who, when he was but eight years old, placed him in the community of the Carmelite fathers in Florence. There he became a painter, and remained in the monastery till 1432. He seems to have ultimately received a dispensation from his religious vows. Although he made a large income, he frequently fell into poverty, in consequence, probably, of his numerous love

affairs. Browning introduces us to him while working for the munificent House of the Medici, where he was mewed up in the palace painting saints. He escaped from his window for a night's frolic with the girls in the streets below. Arrested by the watchmen, he makes his defence and tells them his history. The period is that in which the world was revolting from the austere religionism which dominated art, and, in the glory of the Renaissance, was beginning to realize that "the world is no blot for us, nor blank; it means intensely, and means good." This is the key-note of the poem, and it is easy to see that Fra Lippo had the poet's sympathies in his view of the province of the fine arts.

The flower songs in the poem are of the variety known as "Stornelli"; the peasants of Tuscany sing them at their work.

Andrea del Sarto (called "The Faultless Painter").—This poem deals with the character of the famous painter of the Florentine school who was born in 1487. He married Lucrezia del Fede, the widow of a hatter, in 1512. She was a very handsome woman, and our picture galleries, in many of Andrea's paintings of the Madonna, give proof of this, as she was the model for many of his most famous pictures. Vasari describes her as faithless, overbearing and vixenish. Two of his pictures were sent to the French Court, and were so admired that Andrea was invited to Paris by Francis I. He went in 1518, and was cordially received and handsomely rewarded. At his wife's request he returned to Italy, and was entrusted by the King of France with a sum of money to pur-

chase works of art for him in that country. This money the painter spent in building a house for himself in Florence. He dwelt there throughout the remarkable siege, and caught the pestilence which followed, dying in 1531, at the age of forty-three. As Abt Vogler is Browning's greatest music poem, so is Andrea del Sarto his greatest art poem, and both are unique. "Faultless but soulless" is the verdict of art critics on Andrea's works, and in this poem Browning tells us why this was so. Andrea was an immoral man, passionately demanding love from a woman who had neither heart nor intellect. He robbed King Francis, his generous patron, and neglected his parents in their poverty and old age. Lucrezia was not the cause of her husband's failure. No woman ruined his soul—he had none to ruin; yet he lived and worked to please his wife, and she despised him in return.

The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church.—This poem is the monologue of a bishop of the art-loving, luxurious, and licentious Renaissance, who lies dying, and instead of preparing his soul for death, is engaged in giving directions about a grand tomb he wishes his relations to erect in his church. Mr. Ruskin says of this poem: "It is nearly all that I have said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of the 'Stones of Venice,' put into as many lines, Browning's also being the antecedent work."

Bishop Blougram's Apology.—The Bishop is a man of letters, of fastidious taste and of courtly manners, and withal a *bon vivant*. Mr. Gigadibs is a young literary man, a writer of smart articles for the magazines, but shallow and ignorant

of the world outside that of books. He settles everything in a flippant, free-thinking way, and maintains that Blougram cannot really believe in what he pretends to defend, and can only be acting a part. He is dining with the Bishop, and after dinner is treated to his lordship's "Apology." Poor Gigadibs makes a sorry figure before the learned casuist and ironical dialectician, and must have been glad to escape from his post-prandial vivisection.

It is generally supposed that the character of the late Cardinal Wiseman was intended here, but the picture drawn is that of "an arch hypocrite and the frankest of fools," and no one who was acquainted with Dr. Wiseman, unless indeed he were a Gigadibs, could have thought the likeness a true one. The poem is brilliantly clever, and some passages are full of beauty.

Cleon.—Cleon and Protus are imaginary characters. The time is that of the dark decadence of the Pagan world, just as the light of Christianity was dawning. Cleon is a poet from the isles of Greece, who has received a letter from his royal patron Protus, with many costly gifts. The king has asked him if he has not "attained the very crown and proper end of life," and having so greatly succeeded, does he fear death as do lower men? Cleon professes his profound discouragement with life at even its best; most progress is most failure. It will be no comfort to him sleeping in his urn that men will tell his praise. "It is so horrible." He would like to believe that Zeus may intend us for some future state, but this was not revealed! And as he complained St. Paul was preaching to the

Pagan world the message of life and immortality which Christ had revealed. "Their doctr ne could be held by no sane man," wrote Cleon. The time was fast approaching when the doctrine would be rejected "by no sane man."

Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli.—Geoffrey de Rudel was a French troubadour. In the poem he compares himself to the sun-flower as he turns to the East, where his lady dwells afar. The sun-flower is not concerned for the bees which gather its sweetness, nor he for the men who feed on his songs. The Lady of Tripoli is his concern.

One Word More. To E. B. B. (1855).—In these most exquisite and sacred lines Mr. Browning dedicated his collection of poems called "Men and Women" to his wife, his "Moon of poets." He desires to offer her some gift more precious than those he gave the world. As Rafael used his Madonna-consecrated pencil to write sonnets to his lady, and Dante painted an angel for Beatrice, so he will for the moment leave his proper work of speaking other men's thoughts, and pour out his own heart's love for his wife in these passionate lines, as his most unique offering.

IN A BALCONY:

(1855.)

In a Balcony.—Concentrated into a single hour, we have here the crises of three lives revealing a tragedy which has for its scene the balcony of a palace. The persons are a Queen in whom middle life is passing, leaving her craving for love unsatisfied, though she is married in form but not in heart.

Constance, a cousin of the Queen and a lady of the Court, is loved by Norbert, who is in the Queen's service. He has served the State well, and the Queen has set her heart upon him. Constance is a diplomatist, and an unfortunate one, for she urges that her lover must not permit the Queen to know that his heart is pledged to Constance, but must pretend that he has served the Queen for her own sake. Constance is prepared to sacrifice herself for Norbert and the Queen, who eagerly grasps at the love which she believes is offered her. Norbert, however, in protesting his love for Constance, is overheard by the Queen, who at once sees her hopes dashed to the ground, and that by an insulting plot. The festive music of the ball proceeding within is stopped as the Queen leaves the balcony; the footsteps of the guard approach, the lovers feel their impending doom, but one passionate moment unites them in heart for ever.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(1864.)

James Lee's Wife.—In a series of meditations an unhappy wife indicates the development of her conviction that her husband has ceased to love her, and that it is futile for her to struggle any longer to win him back.

I. **At the Window.**—She reflects that summer has departed. Winter falls heavily on her heart. "Will he change too?"

II. **By the Fireside.**—The fire is built of "shipwreck wood." Are her hopes to be shipwrecked also?

III. **In the Doorway.**—The steps of coming winter hasten. Her heart shrivels. God meant that love should warm the heart when the world was cold without.

IV. **Along the Beach.**—It is no longer apprehension—it is certainty. Her love—and she gave him all she had—had become irksome to him.

V. **On the Cliff.**—It is summer. She watches a rock left dry by the surf as she leans on the turf burnt to the roots, and on the rock there settles a magnificent butterfly, blotting out the ugliness of rock and turf. So does love glorify the burnt and bare minds of men.

VI. **Reading a Book, under the Cliff.**—She reads a poem written by a young man (Browning when twenty-three) on the wailing of the wind. "Is the wind a dumb winged thing," he asks, "entrusting its cause to him?" She says it is not suffering, it is change. "Nothing endures; there's life's pact, perhaps probation."

VII. **Among the Rocks.**—She comforts herself by the reflection that we may make the low earth-nature better by suffusing it with our love-tides.

VIII. **Beside the Drawing Board.**—She has failed to draw the cast of a dead hand in its infinite beauty. There is a great deal more than beauty in the hand of a peasant girl even. The living woman is better than the dead cast. She will be

up and doing. She cannot draw perfection, and she cannot gain love ; she will no longer dream.

IX. **On Deck.**—She leaves James Lee. Love may not cease altogether, but it may be weary and worn out. So she set him free. She owned she had no beauty ; but had he loved her, love could have made her beautiful. In the years to come it may be even so, and his eyes at last be opened.

Gold Hair : a Story of Pornic.—Pornic is a seaside town in Brittany, and the story is a true one. A young girl with a saintly reputation and a wealth of golden hair lay dying, and desired that her hair might not be disturbed after her death. Her wishes were respected, and she was buried near the high altar of the church of St. Gilles. Some years afterwards, in repairing the floor, it was found that the coffin had fallen to pieces, and thirty double louis-d'or were discovered that had been hidden by the girl in her hair. She was at heart a miser.

"Original sin," says the poet, "the corruption of man's heart," is illustrated by the girl's avarice.

The Worst of It.—A man loves a wife who has proved false to him. He sorrows, not for his own loss, but that his swan must take the crow's rebuff. He hopes she may reach heaven's purity at last. He will live on, but if they meet in Paradise, will pass, nor turn his face.

Dîs Aliter Visum [1] **; or, Le Byron de nos Jours.**—An elderly man meets a young woman after a parting of ten years. They had been lovers, but the man's prudence raised a barrier to their union, and both lovers missed their life's chance. He chose a lower ideal, she married where she could not love ;

[1] "Heaven thought not so."—Virgil, *Æn.* ii. 428.

so the devil laughed, for he had four souls in jeopardy.

Too Late.—A man, addressing a dead woman whom he has loved and lost, tells her she was his life, though he had never declared his love, so that she married another who did not love her " nor any one else in the world." Even now that she is dead, he will be her slave while his soul endures.

Abt Vogler.—The noblest music poem in the language, perhaps the highest appreciation of music that can be found in the literature of the world. The musician, Abt Vogler, was born at Wurzburg, 1749, and died 1814. He has been extemporising on his organ, and has created something that has vanished beyond recall, but he reflects that nothing that is good can ever be lost ; only evil perishes. In his inspiration the spiritual has asserted its power over the material, and he has had a vision of God.

He has created something which he compares to a palace of sounds too perfect to be lost. In heaven we are to find " the perfect round." All we can discover here are " the broken arcs." But from the Mount of Transfiguration he must come down to the common round and daily task ; he feels for the common chord, and resting in the C Major of this life he falls asleep.

Rabbi Ben Ezra.—Abenezra, or Ibn Ezra, was one of the most eminent Jewish literati of the Middle Ages. He was born at Toledo about 1090, was a great traveller and a voluminous writer. He was the first who raised Biblical exegesis to the rank of a science. His philosophy, as expressed in the poem, teaches that our life is to be viewed as a

whole. Youth and age, care and doubt, are the life stimuli of the soul. Our rebuffs, our stings to urge us on, and our strivings are the measure of our ultimate success. The flesh can help the soul as that helps the body. We are to await death without fear. We are the cup, God is the potter ; we receive our shape by every turn of the wheel and the touches of the Master's hand. We are not to judge of the cup by its stem, but by the bowl which presses the Master's lips. Youth must seek its heritage in age.

A Death in the Desert.—St. John, the beloved disciple, lay dying, worn with the weight of well-nigh a hundred years ; he was the last of the men who had seen the Lord and the final link which bound the youthful Church to its apostolic days. He lay in a cave, hiding from the persecutors of the followers of Christ. Watched and attended by five converts, the dying saint is roused from his unconscious state by a youth who repeats in his ear the words from the gospel he had written, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The saint is roused, reflects that soon it will be that none will say "I saw." Already men had disputed and misbelieved ; he foresaw that unborn people in strange lands would one day ask, "Was John at all, and did he say he saw ?" What can he say to assure them ? He declares that the gospel has infinitely more power than mere history ; faith is better than sight, and the story of the cross will spread till all men attain the prize of learning love and will no more part with it than men would give up the use of fire for purple or for gold. John had seen the transfiguration and the miracles of

Christ, yet even he, John, had forsaken Him and fled ; yet he had gained the truth and others would succeed him who would joyfully embrace martyrdom, having learned love. Miracles are nought, love is all. The way to solve all questions is to accept by the reason the Christ of God. Man of necessity must pass from mistake to fact. The age of doubt will come but Christianity will never die. Progress comes through struggles and uncertainty. For himself, he would remain on earth another hundred years to help his struggling brothers, but even as he utters the loving expression of his desire he is dead, "Breast to breast with God, as once he lay."

Caliban upon Setebos ; or Natural Theology in the Island.—The original of Caliban is the savage and deformed slave of Shakespeare's "Tempest." Setebos was the Patagonian god (Settaboth in Pigafetta). The island may be the Utopia of Hythloday.

The object of the poem is to rebuke the anthropomorphic idea of God as it exists in ignorant and unloving minds.

It is an attempt to trace the evolution of the concrete idea of the Supreme Being. Brutal and coarse minds credit the Creator with their own malign, vindictive, capricious sentiments towards mankind. Caliban thinks that Setebos makes things to amuse himself, just as Caliban does. He thinks there may be a something over Setebos that made him call it "The Quiet." This Quiet may conquer Him. All at once a storm comes and Caliban is frightened ; he feels he was a fool to gibe at Setebos. He will lie flat and love Him.

Confessions.—A dying man indignantly repudiates the suggestion that he has found the world "a vale of tears." He had loved.—

> How sad and bad and mad it was!—
> But then, how it was sweet!

May and Death.—The verses express the wish that all the delights of spring had died with the dearly-loved friend the poet had lost. He retracts the wish, "let May be still May." Yet he would except one plant of the woods which has in its leaves a streak of spring's blood. That blood comes from his heart. The spotted Persicaria is the plant referred to.

Deaf and Dumb: A Group by Woolner.—The keynote of the poem expresses the idea that a glory may arise from a defect, just as the prism's obstruction breaks a ray of sunlight into the seven colours of the spectrum.

Prospice (Look Forward).—The poet "ever a fighter," far from fearing death here anticipates with courage the last and best fight of all. The poem was written shortly after the death of Mrs. Browning.

Eurydice to Orpheus: A Picture by Leighton.—The poet represents Eurydice speaking to Orpheus the passionate words of love which made him forget the commands of Pluto and Persephone not to look back, on pain of losing his wife again.

Youth and Art.—A meditation on "What might have been"—in love. Love's prize missed—all lost for ever.

A Face.—A girl's face painted by an artist poet.

A Likeness.—"The abomination of desolation

in the holy place." The stranger violating the sacred shrine in a man's heart.

Mr. Sludge, "The Medium."—"Sludge" is D. D. Home, the American Medium, and in the poem Browning analyses the ignoble case of an impostor detected in cheating one of his dupes by his pretended communications with the spirit world. He is about to be kicked out of the house but is permitted to make his defence. The impostor declares that the public are willing to be deceived, "it's all your fault, you curious gentlefolk!" The poet puts into the rogue's mouth the best defence that can be made for the dishonest mediums. The public prompt the mediums, push them to the brink, they are compelled to dive. They only manufacture what is demanded. The medium explains that the spirits have to make use of very defective means in communicating with mortals. The spirit of Beethoven using the mind of a medium ignorant of music can but imperfectly express the composer's musical soul. Sludge reminds his patrons that the Bible teaches spiritualism, and claims that he has aided the cause of religion by his demonstrations that with the spirit world "we've sure way of intercourse, just as in Saul's time." The specious reasoning of the scamp fails to reassure his awakened dupe, who pays his fee and dismisses him. The true character of the impostor is revealed by the volley of abuse he pours out when he has left the house.

Apparent Failure.—Describes a visit to the Morgue at Paris. The poet sees three bodies of suicides exposed for identification. They are

perhaps victims respectively of Pride, Covetousness, and Lust, but the optimist poet's faith does not fail him even there. "What God blessed once can never prove accurst."

Epilogue.—David, Renan and Browning himself are the three religious prophets of this poem. David represents the highest point reached by the purest Theism of the Hebrew people. Renan voices the bereavement of an age which has found that there is no God and that we are all orphans. Browning offers us consolation, the Christ-face has not left us, it does not vanish, or but decomposes to recompose. The Christ-face grows, the idea expands with the needs of the age.

BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE.

(1871.)

Balaustion's Adventure : Including a Transcript from Euripides.—Balaustion was a Greek girl from Rhodes, who, when the Athenians were defeated at Syracuse refused to forsake Athens. She fled from Rhodes and saved her companions in the ship when by accident it was driven towards Syracuse, by reciting to them the Alkestis of Euripides. The people loved the Greek poets, and she was carried in triumph to recite the play as she had seen it acted in Rhodes. A young man who heard her accompanied her to Athens, where they were married. The story of Alkestis, the wife of Admetus, is a familiar one. She laid down her life for her husband when she had been told by an oracle that he could not recover from

the malady from which he suffered unless some friend died in his stead. According to some classical writers Hercules brought her back to earth from Hades. Browning's poem is no mere translation of the Greek, but as has been said is "a beautiful misrepresentation of the original."

ARISTOPHANES' APOLOGY;

(1875.)

Aristophanes' Apology: Including a Transcript from Euripides: being **The Last Adventure of Balaustion.**—Balaustion has married Euthukles the young man whom she met at Syracuse. She had seen the poet Euripides and had paid her homage to his genius. The poet is dead and Athens has fallen. Leaving the doomed city she has set sail with her husband for Rhodes. She records her recollections of her Euripides in Athens and bids her husband write down her words as she speaks. She recalls the night when they heard that the poet was dead, and how she had opened his poem—the "Herakles"—and began to read. Suddenly the drunken voices of Aristophanes, the comic poet, and his companions disturb them. Balaustion loves genius and bows to Aristophanes though he is drunk. The poet's comedy has just been crowned. It was called "Thesmophoriazusae" ("The Women's Festival"); and he visits Balaustion as the admirer of Euripides that he may justify his treatment of the dead poet. Balaustion questions him, she

puts him on his defence, and hence the "Apology." The author of the "Alkestis" was but a prig; he wrote of wicked things. Aristophanes attacked the abuses of the time. He saw the "Herakles," which the tragic poet had given to Balaustion. When the dignity and purity of Balaustion had abashed the giddy companions of Aristophanes they left the poet in converse with his hosts, and then for many pages we have the comic poet's defence of his works and Balaustion's criticisms thereon. Browning's poem is filled with allusions to the plots and characters of the plays of Aristophanes and cannot be understood without a somewhat lengthy commentary such as would be unsuitable to a mere primer of Browning. The whole poem is minutely analysed and the classical allusions are explained in my "Browning Cyclopaedia."

The apology made by Aristophanes endeavoured to prove that comedy was the best way of teaching truth, and he challenges Balaustion to deny this. She tells him how the dead Euripides had given her the "Herakles," and proposes to read it as defence. She read.

[The "Herakles" or Raging Hercules of Euripides is literally translated by Browning. It deals with the last of the twelve labours of the hero when he descended into hell to bring upon earth the three-headed dog Cerberus.]

The reading of this work which was interrupted by the entry of Aristophanes and his companions had sobered the poet. He muses, holds that Evil and Little are just as natural as Good and Great, and he demands to know them and not one phase

of life alone. He bids his host and hostess farewell and departs.

For Balaustion and her husband "Back to Rhodes!" she cried. "There are no gods, no gods! Glory to God—who saves Euripides!"

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

(1868–9.)

The Ring and the Book. — This long poem was published in four volumes, each consisting of three books. The title of the work is explained in the opening lines of Book I, which gives the dry facts of the long story in brief. When a Roman jeweller makes a ring he mingles his pure gold with a certain amount of alloy, so as to enable it to bear file and hammer ; but, the ring having been fashioned, the alloy is dissolved out with acid, and the ring in all its purity and beauty remains perfect. So much for the Ring. For the Book it happened thus : Mr. Browning was one day wandering about the square of St. Lorenzo, in Florence, and on a street stall where all sorts of odd things were exposed for sale he purchased an old square yellow book, part print, part manuscript, with the following summary of its contents —

A Roman murder-case:
Position of the entire criminal cause
Of Guido Franceschini, nobleman,
With certain Four the cut-throats in his pay,
Tried, all five, and found guilty and put to death
By heading or hanging as befitted ranks,
At Rome on February Twenty-Two,
Since our salvation Sixteen Ninety-Eight ;
Wherein it is disputed if, and when,

Husbands may kill adulterous wives yet, 'scape
The customary forfeit.

Before the ring was fashioned the pure gold lay in the ingot, so the pure truth of the murder case lay in this book; but it was not in such a form as a poet could use. As the jeweller adds alloy to permit the artistic working of the ring, so the poet must mix his fancy with the simple legal evidence contained in the Book so as to make it presentable to the reader. The hard facts of the case are these. The Public Prosecutor demands the punishment of Count Guido Franceschini and his accomplices for the murder of his wife. Then the counsel acting for the accused protests that Guido ought to be rewarded with his four friends as sustainers of law and society. He killed his wife, it is admitted, but did it laudably. The case was postponed. It was argued that the woman was a saint and martyr. More postponement. Then it was argued that she was a miracle of wickedness. More witnesses and more arguments on both sides. The court pronounced Count Guido guilty, his murdered wife Pompilia pure in thought, word and deed; and signed sentence of death against all the accused. But Guido's counsel made another move. The count claimed clerical privilege as, in accordance with the frequent custom of the time, he was in one of the minor orders of the priesthood. Appeal was therefore made to the Pope. Roman society began to talk, the quality took the husband's part, the Pope was benevolent and unwilling to take life; Guido stood a chance of getting off. But the Pope was shrewd and conscientious; and,

having mastered the whole matter, said "Cut off Guido's head to-morrow and hang up his mates." And it was done.

All this was the pure metal of the little book, but we want to know more. Who was the handsome young priest Caponsacchi who carried off the wife? Who were the old couple, the Comparini, who were murdered with Pompilia? Browning has ferreted it out for us, mixing his fancy with the facts so as to bring them home to us the better. He has been to Arezzo the Count's city—the wife's "trap and torture place." He visited Castelnuovo, where husband and wife and priest for first and last time met face to face. He visited Rome, pondered all the story in his soul in Italy and in London when he returned home till the whole of the events lived again in his brain. Count Guido, of an ancient though poor family, married Pompilia Comparini—young, good and beautiful—at Rome; and brought her to his home at Arezzo, where they led miserable lives. That she might find peace, the wife ran away in company of the priest Caponsacchi, to her parents at Rome; and the husband followed with four accomplices, caught her in a villa on a Christmas night with her putative parents and killed the three. Pompilia's infant, Guido's first-born son, had been put previously in a place of safety.

The Poem as above explained is in twelve books, thus :—

Book I. The dry facts in brief as just given.

Book II. Half Rome (the view of those antagonistic to the wife).

Book III. The Other Half Rome (repre-

senting the opinions of those who take her part).

Book IV. Tertium Quid (a third party, neither wholly on one side or the other).

Book V. Count Guido Franceschini (his own defence).

Book VI. Guiseppe Caponsacchi (the Canon's explanation).

Book VII. Pompilia (her story, as she told it on her death-bed to the nuns).

Book VIII. Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis (Count Guido's counsel and his speech for the defence).

Book IX. Juris Doctor Johannes-Baptista Bottinius (The Public Prosecutor's speech).

Book X. The Pope (who here reviews the whole case and gives his decision on Guido's appeal to him).

Book XI. Guido (his last interview in prison with his spiritual advisers).

Book XII. The Book and The Ring (the conclusion of the whole matter).

Book II. **Half Rome.**—The scene is in the Church where the bodies of the murdered Comparini are exposed to view before the altar. The story of the tragedy is told by a partisan of Count Guido. Pietro and Violante Comparini are the reputed parents of Pompilia. They were wealthy and had a suburban villa in Rome. The husband craved an heir, and the wife by a trick had, at the appropriate time, produced an infant which she had purchased, and made him believe it was his own daughter. Violante having been successful in this, determined, when the girl became of

marriageable age, to find a suitable husband for her. Count Guido was the man who was tricked into marrying Pompilia. The woman told her husband nothing of the matter till the ceremony had taken place, when he pretended to be indignant. The pair accompanied their daughter to her husband's palace at Arezzo, which they found poverty-stricken and miserable. The Count's old lady-mother was a dragon, his brother Girolamo a bad, licentious man. After four months of this purgatory, Pompilia's parents left Arezzo, and returned to Rome. There the mother told the truth about Pompilia, with the object of cheating the Count out of the dowry that it was agreed should be paid. The case came before the Courts, but they refused to intervene. Pompilia, left alone with her old husband, looked outside for life, and Caponsacchi, the young priest, appeared. People began to talk, the husband to open his eyes. One morning Guido awoke to find his wife flown ; she and the priest had gone off to Rome in the night, the husband having previously been drugged, it was alleged. The fugitives were overtaken, the police arrested the priest. They demanded to be taken to Rome. Love letters were produced, and the case was fought before the lawyers. The accused declared that the letters were not written by them. The priest was sentenced to three years' exile, the wife was sent to a convent for awhile. Guido and Pompilia both demanded a divorce. Shortly after this Pompilia was allowed to reside with her pretended parents. She gave birth to a child. Guido was furious, and went to Rome, to the villa, with

four confederates, he pretending to be Caponsacchi the priest. The door was opened, when he rushed in with his braves, with the result that the two Comparini are lying in the church and Pompilia is in the hospital dying of her wounds.

Book III. **The Other Half Rome** makes excuses for Pietro and Violante. Their fault was a venial one. Violante's confession was but right and proper. As for the wooing, it was all done by the Count. Guido pronounced the whole tale one long lie, and threw himself on the Courts, and it was decided that he was to retain the dowry. Then more proceedings. The Count formed the diabolical plan to drive his girl-wife, by his cruelty, into the sin which would enable him to be rid of her without parting with her money.

Pompilia could not write, but by fraud he concocted a letter by guiding her hand over pencilled words, the purport of which she did not know, that implicated her in an attempt to dishonour and injure him. He set a trap into which she could not avoid falling. The priest, Caponsacchi, learning her sad story and moved by compassion, aided her to escape. Pompilia had previously appealed to the secular Governor and the Archbishop, but both were friends of Guido, and refused to interfere.

The story of the investigation before the Courts was told : how Pompilia owned that she caught at the sole hand stretched out to snatch her from hell ; how Caponsacchi proudly declared that as man, and much more as priest, he was bound to help weak innocence ; how he exposed the trap

set by Guido for them both ; how he had never touched her lips, nor she his hand, from first to last, nor spoken a word the Virgin might not hear. The rest we know.

Book IV. **Tertium Quid**—"A third something"—expresses the opinion of the courtly and polite person who looks with a sort of contempt on this "episode in burgess-life." He finds it difficult to decide who was fool and who knave ; who sinned more was a nice point. He opines that there were "six of one and half a dozen of the other." The finer vengeance which became old blood was Guido's ; the victim was the hard-beset Pompilia, the hero of the piece Caponsacchi.

Book V. The poem now deals directly with the persons of the drama, and here Browning is at his best in the psychological analysis of a set of characters which could have been resolved into their elements so completely by no other poet save Shakespeare. His Iago is Guido ; Pompilia, the martyred saint ; Caponsacchi, God's champion ; the Pope, Vicegerent of God—all these characters, so diverse, are made to live before us, so that we know them better than we know ourselves. Guido is led into the Court straight from the torture chamber, where he has confessed the murders, and defends himself, maintaining that what he did was on behalf of religion and social morality. He was cheated and duped by Pompilia and her parents. His wife broke her pact, and published the fact to all the world, and she was no dove, either. She might have conquered him by love and cured him by patience, had she cared to try. He was law's mere executant, and he demands of

the court his life, liberty and good name. For God's law he had dared and done all.

Book VI. The Court next hears the story of Caponsacchi. He admits that when he became a priest he was a fribble and a coxcomb, but he was a man of truth. He was regular at service, but as regular where beauty and fashion ruled. He tells how he first saw Pompilia at the theatre. "A lady, young, tall, beautiful, strange and sad," the sight of her "wonderful white soul" shining through the sadness of her face, had filled him with disgust for the vanity of his former life. Lent was near; he would live as became a priest. One evening a masked messenger brought him a letter. It purported to come from the lady he had noticed and spoken of at the theatre. Caponsacchi was annoyed; he saw through Guido's transparent trick. The message was repeated again and again; he was urged to pass the lady's window, and glance up thereat if only once. He went, determined to punish the Count. There he saw Pompilia. She told him she had many letters from him, but could neither read nor write. She was in the power of the woman who had brought them, and she implored him to help her to escape to her parents. "Take me to Rome; take me as you would take a dog!" The end of it was that he brought a carriage—the rest we know. He told the judges that he had never touched Pompilia except as sacredly as priests carry the vessels of the altar. In a frank and dignified appeal to the Court, he explained how it was that God had struck the spark of truth from contact between his and Pompilia's soul. He sees a judge weeping;

he is glad—they see the truth. Even while he pleads for Pompilia, they tell him she is dead. He has been excited in his address; now he grows calm again and concludes with a despairing cry to the God whom he is no longer permitted to serve as priest.

Book VII. **Pompilia.**—From her death-bed Pompilia tells the story of her life. She is just seventeen years and five months old; has been "the mother of a son exactly two weeks." She has twenty-two dagger wounds, suffers not too much pain, and is to die to-night. Now she will never see her boy. People said husbands love their wives; hers had killed her. They said Caponsacchi, though a priest, did love her, and "no wonder you love him," shaking their heads, pitying and not blaming very much. Then she tells the story of the dreadful night. As she sinks away from life, she finds that sorrows change into something better. Her child is safe, her pain not very great. Then she told the nuns how all this trouble came about. Up to her marriage, at thirteen years, she was very happy. Then one day Violante told her she meant next day to bring a cavalier whom she must allow to kiss her hand. He would be the same evening at San Lorenzo to marry her; but all would be as before, and she would still live at home. But she must hold her tongue; that was the way with girl-brides. Next, Guido came. He was old and like an owl, and his smile and touch of her hand made her uncomfortable.

They were married one night, and she thought all was over, as she still remained at home. One

morning, however, Guido came to claim his wife, then she saw her mother was to blame. She was to be noble, and live in a palace. They were not to separate. All would live together at Arezzo. And so she went with Guido. Since then all was a terrific dream to her. The Count had married for money, and it was not forthcoming, so he turned upon her in his rage. He accused her of being a coquette. In her trouble she went to the Archbishop, but he would not interfere. Her husband's hate increased. Henceforth her prayers were to God alone. Three years she dwelt in that gloomy palace, when, one day, she learned that there could be a man who could be a saviour to the weak, and to the vile a foe. It was at the play where she first saw Caponsacchi. At supper her husband threatened her with his sword. Her maid, in league with her master, told her of the priest who loved her. Pompilia bade her say no more, but the importunity continued. When April was half over, and every one was leaving for Rome, and Caponsacchi, too, she thought was it possible she also could reach Rome ? Her husband's relative, Conti, suggested, " Ask Caponsacchi ; he's your true St. George." She told the maid Caponsacchi might come. He came, she spoke of her contemplated flight her yearning to be at rest with her parents in Rome. Then she told of all the horrors of the fatal night. She forgave her husband. She could not love him, but his mother did. Her body, but never her soul, had lain beside him.

Then, with her fast-failing mind-sight, she turns to the image of " the lover of her life, the

soldier-saint." He is a priest, and could not marry ; nor would he if he could, she thinks ; the true marriage is for heaven.

Book VIII. **Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis.**—He is counsel on behalf of Count Guido, and we are introduced to him as he is preparing the defence he is to make for his client. He is a family man, and it is the birthday of his son, and he congratulates himself on the good fortune which has given him a noble to defend, and in so good a cause, too, as the defence of his honour. He will display his eloquence and learning, but does it all in a perfunctory manner.

Book IX. **Juris Doctor Johannes-Baptista Bottinius** is the Public Prosecutor. He is a bachelor man-of-the-world, with no very lofty ideas about anything. He thinks highly of Pompilia in a way, but supposes there were some friskings. He does not altogether credit Pompilia's story. She had made her confession at the point of death, and was absolved ; it was only charity in her to spend her last breath by pretending utter innocence, and thus rehabilitate the character of Caponsacchi. She was not bound to tell the naked truth about him.

Book X. **The Pope.**—Guido, having claimed "benefit of clergy," the case has now come before the Pope as to a court of final appeal. The Pope (Innocent XII) has made a prolonged study of the evidence adduced on the trial, and the whole circumstances of the case ; now he has to decide the fate of the Count and his accomplices in the murder. He must be just, and dare not let the felon go free. Guido's life was furnished with all

the help a Christian civilization could bestow, and he deliberately clothes himself with the protection of the Church, that he might violate the law with impunity. Three parts consecrate, he sought to do his murder in the Church's pale. He believed only in the vile of life. His cruelty, lust of money, and crafty malice enveloped Pompilia, but her ermine-like soul took no pollution from all this. It arose that in the providence of God were born new attributes to two souls. Priest and wife—both champions of truth—developed new safeguards of their noble natures.

Caponsacchi, his "warrior-priest," has masqueraded, but it was grandly done. He championed God at first blush. When temptation came he had taken it by the head and hair, had done his battle, and has praise. The Church's men-at-arms were negligent while this man in mask and motley had to do their work. For Guido he has no hope unless the truth be at last flashed out "and Guido see, one instant, and be saved." The Pope signs the order for the execution of the Count and his accomplices.

Book XI. **Guido.**—The Count is now in the prison cell awaiting execution. His friends, Cardinal Acciaiuoli and Abate Panciatichi, are to remain with him till the fatal moment. He pleads with them for their aid, still protesting his innocence. Why must he die? What though half Rome condemned him? the other half took his part. Repent? not he! He is impenitent. Would the Church slay the impenitent? "Take your crucifix away!" he cries, and then, when all seems hopeless, he begins to abuse the Pope, the

Cardinals, and all. And while he curses he hears the chant of the Brotherhood, who sing the Office of the Dying at his cell door. He shrieks—

> Abate,—Cardinal,—Christ,—Maria,—God, . . .
> Pompilia, will you let them murder me?

Book XII. **The Book and the Ring.**—On February 22, 1698, Guido and his confederates were executed. This concluding book gives the report of the executions and the comments made about them in Rome from four persons. The first is a letter from a noble stranger in Rome. It begins with gossip about the Pope and politics, and tells of a wager he lost by the execution of Guido. The ecclesiastics who had attended the Count on the eve of his execution were satisfied that they had brought him to repentance. The execution was a fine spectacle, and the Count made a speech to the multitude, begging forgiveness of God and the people's prayers.

There were three letters which were bound up with Browning's famous "find" at Florence. One of these was written by the Count's advocate, De Archangelis, and was addressed to the friends of the Count. He considers that no blot has fallen on the escutcheon of his noble house, as he had respect and commiseration from all Rome. All this was mere politeness. Enclosed with the letter is another for the lawyer, and is to be kept to himself. In it the advocate expresses his annoyance that his superb defence was wasted, and, as he got nothing for his work, he does not care how soon the obstinate Pope dies. The next letter is from the Fisc Bottini. Pompilia's inno-

cence was easily proved. Guido had made very good sport. Bottini wishes he had been on the other side. Pompilia gave him no opportunity to show his skill.

PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU, SAVIOUR OF SOCIETY.

(1871.)

Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Saviour of Society.—The Prince represents the Emperor, Napoleon III. Hohenstiel-Schwangau represents France. The poem is an analysis of the Emperor's supposed character, not a portrait of the man. Mrs. Browning was greatly interested in him and considered him as "the Saviour of Society." She praised him because he came to deliver Italy. The Prince in a reverie at the Tuileries thinks of himself as talking with an adventuress in a room he knew well near Leicester Square, when an exile here. The poet permits him to make an apology for his life—it was Browning's way to let his characters defend themselves thus. The Prince answers the charges brought against him by his enemies, and endeavours, with sophistry, to quiet the reproaches of his own conscience. The poem has been misunderstood by some readers as a defence of Napoleon's expediency in politics. But Browning was as much interested in analysing the soul of a worldly-minded bishop like Blougram, or an impostor like Sludge, as in revealing for us the purity of Pompilia or the wisdom and justice of the Pope in "The Ring and the Book." This poem is one of Browning's dramatic monologues,

and no greater mistake could be made than to suppose the Prince spoke the thought of the creator of this character, although we have sometimes hints of what Browning himself really thinks.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

(1872.)

Fifine at the Fair.—The argument of this poem is very difficult to follow. Mr. Stopford Brooke says, "its involutions resemble a number of live eels in a tub of water."

The Prologue: Amphibian.—This describes a swimmer far out at sea, disporting himself under the noon-sun; as he floats, a beautiful butterfly hovers above him, a creature of the sky, as he for a time, a creature of the water; neither can unite with the other, for neither can exchange elements; still, if we cannot fly, the next best thing is to swim—a half-way house, as it were, between the world of spirit and that of grosser Earth. Browning wonders if the soul of his departed wife hovers over him in this way, and looks with pity on the mimicry of her airy flight. (Mrs. Browning died eleven years before "Fifine" was published.)

The scene of the poem is laid in the neighbourhood of Pornic, a seaside town in Brittany. Browning, while staying there with his family, saw the gipsy woman, who suggested to him the idea of "Fifine." He selected her as a type of the general woman, in contrast to the spiritual type of womanhood. It is the time of the fair when the strolling players visit the place. Don

Juan addressing his wife Elvire (the characters are merely types) expresses a longing to lead the free life these players led. Such an unconventional existence seems far more enjoyable than that of reputable folk. Fifine, he confesses to his wife, has intoxicated him, yet it is Elvire not Fifine whom he loves. He reminds her how, at great cost, he had purchased a Rafael ; he gloated over his prize for a week and then forgot it, in his delight in turning over, leaf by leaf, Doré's last picture book. Yet were his home on fire he would risk his life to save the Rafael, though he were knee deep in Doré's engravings. His wife is the Rafael—Fifine the wood engravings. Yet mere flesh may have charms for the most spiritual of men, and he argues that we may rise out of the false into the true, out of the darkness into the brightness above. Elvire had been neglected for Fifine, the gipsy. We often, whilst weary of respectability, cling to it for propriety's sake—deep down in many minds is the desire to escape, if only for a few moments, from the bonds of conventionality. Elvire represents to him the sea, in which he was just now swimming; Fifine is but the foam-flake, at which we clutch. Evanescent, useless in itself, but as much a part of the sea as the waves themselves. But a man may feel too safe, although in his wife's love he has centred his soul on a fact. There is a charm in the excitement of conquering the commonplace. In fancy he once gazed down, from a pinnacle in Venice, on a Fair at Carnival time and saw the men and women disguised as animals. Descending,

disgust gave way to pity, the people were more human than he thought. Venice Square became the world, to his fancy, the masquerade was life, and he learned that the proper goal for wisdom is the ground and not the sky. He saw how nicely balanced are our hates and loves. We must accept what is, for change is the law, even of the religion by which man approaches God. It is falsehood which is change, the truth is the permanence. There is an unchanging truth to which man in all his waverings is constant. Don Juan and his wife return to their villa, he resolves to live and die a quiet married man, and earn the approbation of the Mayor. At that moment a letter is put into his hand; there has been some mistake Fifine thinks—he has given her gold instead of silver; he will go and see about it and is off. Five minutes was all the time he asked. He is absent much longer, and on his return Elvire has vanished. The Epilogue unites husband and wife. Her spirit has returned to claim him. The final lesson of life is: "Love is all, and death is naught."

Browning once explained that "his fancy was to show, morally how a Don Juan might justify himself partly by truth, somewhat by sophistry."

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

(1873.)

Red Cotton Night-Cap Country; or, Turf and Towers.—The title of this poem was so bestowed in consequence of Browning having met Miss Thackeray in a part of Normandy which

she jokingly christened "White Cotton Night-Cap Country," on account of its sleepiness. Browning, having heard the tragedy which his story tells, said "Red Cotton Night-Cap Country" would be the more appropriate term. Browning visited St. Aubin's in 1872, and was interested in the singular story of the family which owned Clairvaux, a restored priory in the locality. The principal details of the story are true, the names only being altered. Leonce Miranda, the son and heir of a wealthy Paris jeweller, led a dissipated life, and one day fell in love with an adventuress, Clara Mulhausen. She was already married, so the jeweller retired with the woman to Clairvaux, leaving a manager in charge of his business. For five years the couple lived together, then Miranda was called to Paris to account to his mother for his extravagance. He took her reproaches so much to heart that he attempted suicide. He was saved, and restored to health by Clara's nursing, when he was again summoned to his mother, only to find her dead. He was told that his conduct was responsible for her death. He gave up the bulk of his property to his relatives, reserving only enough for the decent support of himself and Clara, from whom he arranged to part for ever. When the time arrived to execute the legal documents he was found before a large fire endeavouring to destroy himself. He had held his hands in the flames till they were destroyed, and was dragged from the room crying, "I must have more hands to burn!" He lay in delirium for three months. When restored to health he took

Clara back to his heart, disposed of his shop and returned to Clairvaux, he devoted his substance liberally to the poor and tried to save his soul by acts of charity. Near Clairvaux there was a pilgrimage chapel with a statue of the Virgin reputed to be miraculous. He became a devotee of our Lady, declaring that it was she who had prompted him to burn off his hands. Mounting the stairs of the View-tower in his grounds, he demands of the Virgin that she should work a miracle for him and France by suspending the law of gravity as he cast himself from the tower. The next moment he lay dead on the turf. He bequeathed his property to the Church, reserving sufficient for the support of Clara. The relatives disputed the will, but it was decided in the lady's favour, and she was chatelaine of Clairvaux, where Browning saw her in 1872.

THE INN ALBUM.

(1875.)

The Inn Album.—The principal features of this tragedy are taken from real life. In the parlour of a village inn an elderly and cultivated roué is playing at cards with a rich young man to whom he has just lost ten thousand pounds at play. The young fellow offers to cancel the debt, which he knows his companion could ill afford to pay. He is assured that it shall be paid. They leave the inn. The young man inquires how it is that his friend with all his advantages is such a failure. He is told that four years ago he had withered his own life ; he should have married a

woman who could have saved him from his wayward existence; had won her heart and then betrayed her, though he had offered to make amends by marriage. She had declined the offer with scorn and had settled down as the wife of a poor country parson, to whom she had unhappily neglected to tell her past, and was consequently at the mercy of the woman-wrecker. For now the scoundrel's love for his victim has turned to hate, because she had disdained to save him from himself. The younger man then tells his story. He has loved a woman who refused him as she was vowed to another. There are points in his story which suggest to him that they have both loved the same woman.

In the third part of the poem we are introduced to the women—an elder and a younger who are talking in the parlour of the inn just left vacant by the card players. The younger is a girl whom the young man of the story is to marry; and she has begged her old friend, the elder woman, to meet her, that she may see the man she is engaged to. During the absence of the younger woman the elder is looking over the inn-album, when she is terror-stricken at seeing her old lover enter the room. The lady is the clergyman's wife, and the man is the old roué, who is waiting for his friend who has won this ten thousand pounds. There are recriminations, and in their midst his old love for her returns, and he entreats her to fly with him. While he kneels by her in bursts the young man, who is startled to see the lady to whom he had vainly offered his heart four years ago. Both

think they have been entrapped. The woman explains her presence there and bids the elder man leave the youth. The devil tempts the roué to one more crime. He writes some lines in the album, closes it and hands it to the woman. In the book he has written a note to her telling her that her young lover is still faithful to her, and threatening her that if she does not receive him on familiar terms the story of her past shame shall be exposed to her husband. Left alone with the young man he proposes to discharge his gambling debt by bartering the woman who has put herself in his power—to compel her to yield herself up to the man in exchange for the money he cannot pay. He leaves the room and in superb composure the intended victim enters.

"Back! in God's name!" she cries. The young man tells her the roué has told heaps of lies about her, which he has not believed; he contrives to let her know the use that was to be made of her. He offers her his hand if free to accept it, any way as her friend. "Till death!" she answers, for she has taken poison. The adversary returns, thinks his scheme successful, congratulates the couple, the woman reads the line in the Album. "Consent. You stop my mouth, the only way." But there was another way. The young man springs at the villain and strangles him. The hunted woman dies, having secured her vindicator's acquittal on the charge of murder by telling the facts in the album.

For the facts of the tragedy see "Notes and Queries," March 25, 1876.

PACCHIAROTTO AND HOW HE WORKED IN DISTEMPER, ETC.

(1876.)

Pacchiarotto and How He Worked in Distemper : with other Poems.—Prologue : The poet on a summer day fixes his eyes on a red brick wall in his garden. The wall is clothed with a luxuriant creeper, and he reflects that wall upon wall divide us from the subtle thing that is spirit ; the body is a barrier, but he will hope hard and send forth his soul to the congenial spirit beyond the ring of neighbours which like a wall divides him from his love.

Of Pacchiarotto.—Jacopo Pacchiarotto was a painter, born in Siena in 1474. In 1530 he took part in the conspiracy of the Libertini and Popolani, and in 1533 he joined the Bardotti, a lazy order of reformers. He had to hide for his life in 1535, and was concealed by an order of priests in a tomb in the church of St. John. He escaped on the second day covered with vermin. He was exiled in 1539, but was soon recalled and died shortly afterwards.

Browning wrote this poem in a frolicsome mood to rebuke the fussy persons who try to set every one else right while neglecting their own proper business. The Bardotti, or "spare horses," walked quietly beside the waggon while the others drew it, the monk who lectures Pacchiarotto

advises him to be a working horse—to stick to his paint brush and earn his own living.

So Browning addresses his critics at an assembly of May-Day sweeps, who suggest that he burns a deal of coal in his kitchen, and the neighbours do say he ought to consume his own smoke.

Browning will not be hard upon them. "'Twas God made you dingy," he says.

At the "Mermaid."—The Mermaid Tavern in Cheapside was the favourite resort of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists. In the person of Shakespeare, Browning tells the world that if they want to know anything about him they must seek it in his works and not try to pry into his life and opinions behind them.

House.—The poet refuses to unlock his heart with a sonnet-key. House fronts often fall out in earthquakes, but a writer may keep his secrets to himself till an imprudent biographer rifles them.

Shop.—The poet deplores the life of men who work only for money, and lose their higher selves in their absorption in earthly employments.

Pisgah-Sights. I.—As from a mountain-top the things below appear small and insignificant, so the vision of life as we are leaving it is bereft of its littlenesses and difficulties. We see the round orb of things as we are lifted away from life. II. If we could live our life over again would we strive any longer? We should be stationary in the midst of the hurry and scurry. But we should have been losers by escaping our trials and strivings when our course was run.

Fears and Scruples.—On the spiritual uses of uncertainty. The silence of the Divine Being is

compared with that of a man's friend who wrote him many valued letters, but otherwise kept aloof from him. In spite of all the man loves on.

Natural Magic.—This illustrates the supreme power which spirit exerts over matter. The power of love is irresistible, it transforms everything.

Magical Nature.—Fleshly graces are those of the flower, the soul's beauty is best symbolised by the gem.

Bifurcation.—A woman loving a man who loves her prefers duty to love, rejects it as a tempter's bribe and chooses the darkling half of life, thereby bringing ruin to the man. We are left to infer which was sinner and which saint.

Numpholeptos (caught or entranced by a nymph).—The man loves passionately an impossible, ideal object, and so, though he cannot attain the perfection demanded, still pursues.

Appearances.—Nothing can beautify the place where we have suffered some great mental distress, and no place can ever be unbeautiful where the true lover wins his life's pearl.

St. Martin's Summer.—It is better to own the power of first love, recognize its permanence in the soul, and let succeeding love be estimated at its value—dead loves are the potent, though living loves dispel ghosts.

Hervé Riel.—The story is strictly historical. The ballad is one of Browning's grandest, and full of the life of the sea waves.

A Forgiveness.—A Spaniard confesses to a priest in church. He had been happy in wife and home, but absorbed in affairs of state had neglected both.

Returning home one night he saw the veiled figure of a man flying from the house. As he turns to enter his door he sees his wife "stone-still, stone-white." "Kill me!" she cried. "The man is innocent; the fault is mine alone. I love him as I hate you. Strike!"

He postpones his vengeance and for three years they live apart in the house. At last the woman demands that this acting shall cease, and then tells him she had loved him and lost him through a lie. She had strung herself to teach him that the first fool she favoured would prize beyond life the treasure he had neglected. It was contempt which filled the husband's mind now. He made her write her confession with her own blood drawn by the point of a poisoned dagger.

The monk to whom the husband confessed was the woman's lover; the husband killed him also.

Cenciaja.—In this poem Browning throws light on the tragic events of the Cenci story. "Cenciaja," the poet once explained, means a bundle of rags—a trifle.

The Pope would have pardoned Beatrice Cenci had not a case of matricide occurred at Rome at the time which determined him to make an example of the Cenci. When the Pope was petitioned on behalf of the family, he said: "She must die. Paolo Santa Croce murdered his mother, and he is fled; she shall not flee at least!"

Filippo Baldinucci on the Privilege of Burial, A Reminiscence of A.D. 1676.—The incidents are historical and relate to the persecution of the Jews in Italy. A Christian farmer owned a field

adjoining the Jews' Cemetery in Florence. The farmer, partly to annoy the Jews, employed the painter Buti to execute a picture of the Virgin Mary and place it just where it would most annoy the Jews. The Jews tried to bribe the owner to turn the picture the other way. The farmer accepted the gold, but played a scurvy trick on them, for he had a picture of the Crucifixion made to confront them. As the artist and his farmer friend were laughing over the trick the Rabbi's son entered the studio desiring to purchase the original oil painting of the Madonna from which the fresco in the field was painted. The artist sold it and the Jew bore it away to hang up, as he explained, in his gallery with Ledas and what not.

Epilogue.—The poet ridicules those who declare that his poems are hard to understand. He declares that they have in their cellars forty barrels with Shakespeare's brand, some five or six of his works are duly appreciated—the rest neglected. There are four big butts of Milton's brew, and we content ourselves with a few drops. Browning has some good old Port for those who can appreciate it—as for the multitude, let them drink nettle-broth till their taste improves.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS.

(1877.)

The Agamemnon of Æschylus. — This is a literal translation. Agamemnon was a king of Mycenæ and Argos and Commander-in-chief of the Greek forces before Troy. He was married to

Clytemnestra, the daughter of Tyndarus, king of Sparta. When the Greek expedition against Troy was detained at Aulis, Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to appease Diana, whom he had offended by killing her favourite stag. During the Trojan War Agamemnon behaved with great valour, but he took Briseis, the favourite mistress of Achilles, by force, and that hero, in consequence, refused to appear in the field till he was recalled to action by the death of his friend Patroclus.

After the fall of Troy, the beautiful Princess Cassandra fell to Agamemnon as his share of the spoils. Cassandra, endowed with the gift of prophecy, warned him not to return home. He was assured that his wife would put him to death, but the warning was disregarded and he returned to Greece. Aided by her adulterer Ægisthus, Clytemnestra murdered her husband as he came from the bath.

LA SAISIAZ.

(1878.)

La Saisiaz.—La Saisiaz is the name of a villa near Geneva. A. E. S. are the initials of Ann Egerton Smith who, while spending the autumn of 1877 with Mr. Browning and his sister at La Saisiaz, died suddenly of heart disease on the morning of September 14. The poem may be considered as Browning's "In Memoriam," and is the result of his musings on death, God, the soul and the future state. Here we have no mere utterances of the dramatist, we have Browning's own

confession of faith on the matters most precious to the human heart. God and the soul exist, this he knows as the mystic and the poet know. Fancy and Reason dispute between them about probation, immortality, reward and punishment. The poem is remarkable for the strength of the conviction it expresses of the necessity and certainty of a future life.

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC.

(1878.)

The Two Poets of Croisic.—Croisic is an old watering place in Brittany. One of the poets is René Gentilhomme, page to the Prince of Condé. The other was Paul Desforges Maillard, who lived in Voltaire's time and who on one occasion made that philosopher look ridiculous. There is no difficulty in understanding these agreeable studies. René wrote a prophetic ode in which he declared that a dauphin would be born, and Condé, whom men began to call "next king," found his hopes wrecked when the prophecy was fulfilled. King Louis, in consequence, called René "Royal Poet." Maillard's poems were always rejected by the papers till by a trick his sister got some of the worst inserted as her own composition, and so deceived an editor and Voltaire, who had praised them.

The prologue and epilogue of the "Two Poets" are exquisite lyrics in praise of love.

DRAMATIC IDYLS.

Dramatic Idyls. First Series (1879).

These are tragedies with psychological studies of the chief actors.

Martin Relph wants to know whether he is a murderer or only a coward. He pretends every year on the anniversary of a certain tragedy that he was a coward, but he has misgivings. In a rebellion, in the reign of King George, the rebels had learned the strength of the Royal troops sent against them by reason of some spy. A girl had written to her lover, the letter had been intercepted, the information innocently given had suggested treason. Her lover was Vincent Parkes; the commander of the troops had sent for this man, who was in a distant part of the country, bidding him come and dispel the cloud hanging over the girl if he could. A week was allowed for the journey, and the man had not appeared. The girl meanwhile had been tried by court-martial and sentenced to be shot that day.

The villagers were assembled to see the sight, and Martin Relph, who had loved the girl, was there also. The word is given, up go the guns, the crowd kneel in prayer, all but Martin Relph, who stands on the hill and sees a man running madly

waving something white. No one in all the crowd sees him but Martin Relph, and he is speechless, makes no sign, and the woman is dead. Vincent Parkes also is dead with the King's letter in his hand that would have saved the woman. Was it fear that kept Martin silent, or was he a murderer ?

Pheidippides (the Greek words mean " Rejoice ! We conquer ").—This-poem tells the story of the athlete who ran from Athens to Sparta to ask for aid in resisting the Second Persian Invasion (B.C. 490). The distance the runner covered in two days and two nights is, according to the route taken, 120 to 150 miles. He was in time to be at Marathon. The battle over, he ran to announce the victory to Athens and fell dead. Herodotus tells the whole story (Book vi. 94–106).

Halbert and Hob.—A study in heredity. A brutal son assaults his father in a quarrel one night. The father is struck mute—he remembers that he had, when a young man, treated his father in a similar fashion. He cries, " I stopped here ; and, Hob, do you the same ! " The son relaxed his hold of his father's throat, and they returned to the home from which the son was casting the old man. Next morning the father was dead and the son insane.

Conscience rules supreme even over heredity and cerebral aberration.

Ivàn Ivànovitch. — In telling the well-known Russian story of the mother who in escaping from the wolves saved herself at the expense of her children's lives, the poet, with his touchstone, brings out the wretched mother's sense of satisfaction at

her own escape. "Life's sweet!" she cries. For this Ivàn Ivànovitch slays her. He is tried for murder and is acquitted by the aged Pope. They tell him he is free. "How otherwise?" he asked.

Tray.—Three bards sing each a song of a hero, but not heroic men but a dog; "a mere instinctive dog," whom a vivisector wishes to dissect alive, is the poet's hero. The dog plunged into the water to save a child's doll, the saving instinct in him being too powerful for his reasoning powers.

Browning hated vivisection. The scientist's mind is not large enough to find room for admiration of a "dog's soul."

Ned Bratts.—The story is taken from "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman," by John Bunyan. It is a tale of the conversion of two bad characters who rush into the Assize Court and demand to be hanged while in a state of grace, lest they should relapse into the sins of which they repent, and so lose the heaven they feel sure of winning, if the Judge will grant the favour they ask. And he did.

Dramatic Idyls. Second Series (1880).

Echetlos.—A legend of the battle of Marathon. Wherever the Greeks were hardest pressed in the fight a figure driving a ploughshare was seen mowing down the enemy's ranks. "Call him Echetlos the ploughshare wielder," said the oracles when asked his name, "the great deed ne'er grows small."

Clive.—The poet deals with a well-known incident in the life of Lord Clive, who founded our Indian Empire. He was a born leader, and held

death as nothing in comparison with loss of honour. He suffered great mental depression and killed himself in 1774. He fought a duel, having lost money at cards to an officer who was proved to have cheated. Clive missed his opponent, who, coming up to him, held his pistol to his head and said he would spare his life if asked to do so. Clive complied. He was next required to retract his charge of cheating. This he refused to do. His antagonist threatened to fire. "Fire and be damned!" replied Clive. "I said you cheated: I say so still, and will never pay you!" The officer was so amazed at his bravery that he threw away his pistol.

Muléykeh.—Describes an Arab's love for his horse. It is said that whoever professes to sell or boasts of having bought a Nejdee horse may be unhesitatingly set down as either deceived or deceiving.

Pietro of Abano, or Petrus Apono (lived 1250–1315) was a famous physician at Abano near Padua, who had studied medicine and other sciences at Padua and Paris. He travelled in Greece and other parts, acquired a knowledge of the Greek language, and was a devoted student of the works of Averroes. He meddled with astrology and was accused of practising magic and of possessing the philosopher's stone. He was found guilty on his second trial by the Inquisition; but as he died before the trial was completed he was merely burned in effigy. (A full account of this great physician and scientist is included in my "Browning Cyclopædia.")

Doctor ——.—This is a Rabbinical story. Satan

complains to God that there is something on earth which interferes with his prerogatives. Death is the strongest-born of hell, and yet a bad wife is stronger than death.

He is commanded to descend to earth in mortal shape and get married, and the poem relates his matrimonial experiences and those of his medical son.

Pan and Luna.—The legend on which this poem is founded was the poetical way of accounting for an eclipse of the moon. The naked goddess flying through the night was grasped by rough red Pan, who made a billowy wrappage of wool tufts to simulate a cloud.

The moral of the poem is that the goddess yielded herself to the love of Pan out of compassion.

JOCOSERIA.

(1883.)

Jocoseria.—The whole of this Jocoseria volume is governed by the question of the first poem, "WANTING IS—WHAT?" The answer is Love is wanting to supplement life in its every phase. In every human action there is some imperfection —always something to come.

Donald.—The story is a true one, and is told by Sir Walter Scott in the "Keepsake" for 1832. "Donald" met a stag on a narrow path on the mountain where he had not room to turn himself. The man lay down on the ledge and the animal cautiously began to step over him, when the sportsman stabbed the creature and they rolled over the precipice together, the stag falling underneath and so breaking the man's fall. He was however seriously injured.

Solomon and Balkis.—This is a story from the Talmud. The Queen of Sheba, discussing high matters with Solomon, contrives to jostle his right hand so that his ring with the truth-compelling Name of Jehovah was turned from the inside to the outside. Then he began to tell her the truth in unpleasant phrase, and turning the Name towards her compels her also to tell the truth. She owns that she came to see Solomon the wise man, and rather than talk philosophy would have a kiss!

Cristina and Monaldeschi.—The circumstances of the poem are historical and relate to Queen Cristina of Sweden and the Marquis Monaldeschi. Cristina abandoned herself to this man, who proved a traitor and a scoundrel. The scene of the tragedy is at Fontainebleau, where the Queen and her Court resided by the hospitality of the French Government after her abdication of the Swedish throne. Here the revelations of her lover's baseness determined her to execute vengeance on her subject. As he knelt at her feet the soldiers stabbed him to death in her presence. She retired to Rome, giving herself up to her artistic tastes, and dying at the age of sixty-three was buried in St. Peter's.

Mary Wollstonecraft and Fuseli.—Mary Wollstonecraft was the foundress of the Women's Rights movement. She was born in 1759. She made a determined attack on the affections of the artist Fuseli, a married man, who remained impervious to her efforts to win them. In doing this she showed little respect for the rights of Mrs. Fuseli.

Adam, Lilith, and Eve.—The Talmudists say that Adam had a wife before he married Eve, who was called Lilith. She was the mother of demons. Browning, however, merely uses the names in this story of falsehood and fear.

Ixion.—Ixion, condemned to eternal punishment, is in the poem described as defying Zeus after the manner of Prometheus. It is impossible to doubt that Browning intends to represent the popular idea of God and his own attitude towards the doctrine of eternal punishment. As Caliban

thought there was a Quiet above Setebos, so Ixion appeals to the Potency over Zeus. The Highest cannot be unjust, whatever Zeus may be.

Jochanan-Hakkadosh.—The name means John the Holy. Browning has several times exhibited in his noblest poems the attractions which the Jewish religion and philosophy had for him. In this poem, as in "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "Ben Karshook's Wisdom" (omitted from "Men and Women" by accident) the fine flower of the Jewish spirit is sympathetically set forth.

Here the poet fuses together the characteristics of several rabbis. Jochanan, becoming an old man, finds that life has been a continued disappointment. As death approaches his loving scholars cluster round him for a parting word of advice. It was suggested by the old rabbi that if his friends would render up to him a portion of their lives he might attain his fourscore years. And so from a lover, a soldier, a poet and a statesman three months of life are accepted, but the experience of the old man chills the aspirations each of these has brought in turn, and all is vanity still. But some lad has added a portion of his life also, and then come heaven-sent thoughts, he has learned love, the secret of life, and in peace and happiness he dies.

"Sinner—saint, live—dead, boy—man." The Hebrew words in the appended verses mean "Collection of many Fables" and "From Moses to Moses [Moses Maimonides]. There was never one like Moses."

Never the Time and the Place.—Joy, beauty all around, time and place all that heart could wish,

but the loved one is absent, and her place cannot be filled. But love is eternal, and the meeting is to come !

Pambo.—St. Pambo was one of the companions of St. Antony in the Nitrian Desert (A.D. 373). Having heard the first verse of the thirty-ninth Psalm, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue," he would not hear the second, but went away saying, "This one verse is enough for me if I learn it as I ought to do." He afterwards said that in nineteen years he had hardly learned to fulfil that one line. Browning fears his critics say that he has been equally unsuccessful !

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

(1844.)

Ferishtah's Fancies.—We have seen Browning as a Rabbi, and as a Pope, we have him before us in the Ferishtah volume as a Dervish. The book is a criticism of life ; Browning's mellow wisdom. There was a celebrated Persian historian named Ferishtah, but he has no connexion with the subject matter of this collection of poems. "The Fables of Bidpai," Firdausi's "Shah-Nâhmeh," and the Book of Job are the sources of the inspiration of "Ferishtah's Fancies."

In the **Prologue** the scheme of the poem is suggested by the mode of eating ortolans in Italy. The birds are stuck on a skewer with a bit of toast and a sage-leaf between each, and the eater bites through crust, seasoning, and bird altogether. The poem is dished up on the same principle. We have sense, that is the bread ; the sight or lesson is the sage-leaf ; and the lyric is the bird or song.

The Eagle.—Ferishtah in training for a dervish desires to feed hungry souls. Man must not play the helpless weakling, but save the perishing by his helpful strength.

The lyric teaches that though solitude and meditation are good for us, our proper place is up and down amid men.

The Melon Seller.—This was a beggar who was

once the Shah's Prime Minister. He was not such a fool as to repine at God's punishments and reproach Him with the happiness he had once tasted in the past.

The lyric suggests that so much undeserved bliss has been imparted that a little injustice is needed to balance things.

Shah Abbas.—This teaches that a loving heart is better than a sceptical head.

The lyric urges that love is the light of life; with that all obstacles disappear.

The Family.—The subject is the Lawfulness of Prayer. "Why pray?" men ask. "Two best wills cannot be." "Let us be man and nothing more," says Ferishtah. Man hoping, fearing, loving, and bidding God help him till he dies.

The lyric bids us while on earth be content to be even without the wisdom of angels.

The Sun.—Poem and lyric deal with the mystery of the assumption by God of a human shape. The divine element of fire is enshrined in earthly flint until the spark escapes. God once incarnate in the form of man is hardly a greater mystery.

Mihrab Shah deals with the mystery of Evil and Pain. Take away from man thanks to God and love of man, what is he worth? The lyric explains the compensations of our existence.

No one has everything; what one lacks another possesses, and this creates a bond of sympathy between us.

A Camel Driver (punishment by man and by God).—Punishment is man's trick to teach. God's process in teaching or punishment nowise resembles man's. Ignorance that sins is safe—our

greatest punishment is knowledge. No other hell than memory will be needed. The lyric teaches that man is over severe with mere imperfections. Some greater faults are either overlooked or called virtues.

Two Camels.—This teaches that self-mortification, if it unfits us for our work, is not pleasing to God. We are here to do our proper work, to desire joy and thank God for it. The "ear hungry for music" is a more intelligible phrase when we know that the organ of Corti in the human ear has three thousand arches, with keys ranged like those of a piano, adapted for the appreciation of every tone-shade. The "seven-stringed instrument" refers to light and the seven colours of the spectrum. The lyric tells us that earth-bliss may be made permanent in heaven, and we must not despise it.

Cherries.—This poem deals with praise and thanksgiving. Some say that man is too weak to praise worthily the Infinite One, let the stars do that. But God will accept our thanksgivings if we offer Him all the love and gratitude we can. We should praise Him for cherries even; we know why He made them, why He made Jupiter we do not know. The lyric tells us that poetry is praising God by the stars; let us give thanks for love if we can offer no higher praise.

Plot Culture.—This teaches that God looks at the harvest of our lives. He does not want to know how we fertilize the soil; of this we are masters absolute, but we must remember doomsday. In the lyric the uses of sense are shown as distinguished from soul.

A Pillar at Sebzevar.—Sage and pupil argue as to which is the better, knowledge or love. Ferishtah says that the only prize of knowledge is the process of acquiring it. But love is victory. There was a pillar with a sun-dial fixed upon it in Sebzevar. Suppose nobody had used it till he knew the history of the man who erected it? Better go to dinner when the dial says "Noon" and ask no questions. If we love we know enough. The lyric bids us not ask for recognition for our love: the deepest affection is the most silent.

A Bean Stripe: Also Apple Eating.—One of Ferishtah's scholars asked whether on the whole Life were a good or an evil thing. He is asked if beans are taken from a bushelful, what colour predominates? The beans are typical of our days. Some are blackish, some whitish, in companionship grey prevails. So joys are embittered by sorrows remembered and troubles anticipated. The Buddha thought the best thing in Life was that it led to Death. But he did not believe it, he lived out his seventy years and liked his dinner to the last.

In the lyric Ferishtah asks no praise for his work on behalf of mankind. He has done his duty. For reward he looks beyond.

Epilogue.—This brings into a focus the rays of the fancies which make up the volume. The famous ones of old were not mummers, but "soldiers all to forward face." It is ours to fight, not question. That concerns our Leaders even though "terror sudden turns the blood to ice."

PARLEYINGS WITH CERTAIN PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE IN THEIR DAY.

(1887.)

Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day.—Browning's love of argument, of analysis of motive is in full force in this volume of questionings with well-nigh forgotten persons who in their day made some stir. For the most part the discussions are dry and lead to nothing very definite, but the personality of the great philosopher-poet, full of hope and love, of joy in living and of unvanquished optimism, is here in all its grandeur.

The **Prologue** introduces us to the abode of the Fates with whom Apollo is pleading for the extension of the years of Admetus. Clotho with her distaff, Lachesis with her spindle, and Atropos with a pair of scissors preside over the destinies of mankind.

Atropos is about to cut the thread of Admetus' life.

The Fates say that life is only illusion—why lengthen it? Apollo replies that man loves life, and he ought to know best, he has a compensation, and the God produces a bowl of wine, of which he invites the ladies to taste. They drink and grow merry, Atropos declaring that even she could live at a pinch, and they agree to spare the life of Admetus. While they are dancing an explosion

from the earth's centre brings them to their senses, and the pact is dissolved, but it is agreed that Admetus shall live if some one can be found to die in his stead.

"Balaustion's Adventure" should be read after this prologue.

Bernard de Mandeville (lived 1670–1733).—He was a doctor who studied medicine at Leyden, and came to England to learn the language. He is celebrated by his book, "The Fable of the Bees." He humorously contended that "private vices are public benefits." "Fools only strive to make a great and honest hive." He satirized English methods, and a great outcry was made about his doctrines. Browning's aim in the poem is to point out the great truths which underlie much of Mandeville's philosophy, when this is carefully examined. The teaching of the poem is, that to make the best use of the world as we find it is wiser than torturing our brains to comprehend mysteries which by their nature and our own weakness are insoluble.

Daniel Bartoli (lived 1608–1685). He was a learned Jesuit who wrote the history of his order in six volumes, which is full of miraculous stories difficult of digestion.

Browning does not deal with these, but tells the cleric that he has a saint whose history is not legendary at all, but very plain fact. The story is that of Marianne Pagot, the apothecary's daughter, who was engaged to marry Duke Charles IV of Lorraine. Hearing however that the price of the King's consent to the marriage was the surrender to His Majesty of certain estates

held by the Duke, she demanded that he should refuse to relinquish them. The Duke was not equal to this, and Marianne left the place refusing to meet him again. A kind noble-hearted young lord hearing the story fell in love with her, and ultimately married her. Before long Marianne died, and her husband turned saint like those of whom Bartoli wrote.

Christopher Smart (lived 1722–1771).—He was a poet who wrote much verse of an inferior quality until his "Song of David" made him famous, and this, it is said, was written with a nail on the wall of a cell in a lunatic asylum in which he was detained. The work is powerful, healthy and deeply religious, bearing no trace of the melancholy circumstances under which it was composed. "How did this happen?" asks Browning, who imagines that he was exploring a great house decently furnished, but not remarkable till on opening a door he finds himself in a gloriously decorated chapel gleaming with richest carving; leaving this he seeks in the rest of the rooms something to compare with the exquisite chapel, but all is calm common-place. He says this is like Smart's glories, it flamed up but once and then died out.

George Bubb Dodington (lived 1691–1762).—A politician whose conduct was "wholly directed by the base motives of avarice, vanity and selfishness." He was intimately connected with the Prince of Wales, and was made Baron Melcombe in 1761. Pope and Churchill satirized him, but he had many to praise him. He aspired to become a patron of literature and literary men, and lived in luxury, making a great display of his wealth.

Browning paints his character to the life, and tells him he is "fool as well as knave."

Francis Furini (lived 1604–1649).—He was a priest who was a distinguished painter of the Florentine school. He excelled in painting the nude, but on his death-bed begged that all his undraped pictures might be collected and destroyed. Browning deals severely with those who think that pictures of the nude have a deleterious influence on the public character. He reasons that we must understand the bodily life of man before we can penetrate to his soul.

Gerard de Lairesse (lived 1640–1711).—A Flemish painter whom the Dutch called their second "Raphael," Heemskirk being the first. Although deformed he was a dandy and led an extravagant life. Towards the end of his days he became blind. He wrote "The Art of Painting," and "The Walk" referred to in the poem was the title of a part of this book. Though blind "he talked all brains, yearning into life." Dull Holland to him became dreamland, and in his treatise on painting he evolved greater things than we can, with all our sight. Browning invites Gerard to walk with him and see what a poet of the present day discerns in the face of Nature, and then follows a magnificent description of the moods of Nature from daybreak to night. But we must "do, and nowise dream, what once lives never dies."

Charles Avison (lived 1710–1770).—He was a musician of Newcastle. He published in 1752 "An Essay on Musical Expression," which startled the world by the boldness with which it put the French and Italian school of music above the German.

The poem is a criticism of the province and office of music in its influence on the mind of man.

> There is no truer truth obtainable
> By man, than comes of music.

The soul as an unsounded sea rolls, says Browning, underneath mind, and none can tell of or track to source the founts of soul. Music essays to solve how we feel, to match feeling with knowledge. Music outdoes both poetry and painting; dredging deeper yet, it drags into day the abysmal growths of soul's deep sea.

Fust and his Friends.—The Prologue to the Parleyings opens with the descent of Apollo the god of music, poetry and eloquence, the Epilogue introduces us to the first printers. Thus we have here the inspirer of the arts and the workmen who produce the efforts of genius. Browning accepts the Fust story of the invention of printing, and here we meet the friends who, looking upon the invention as magical, have come to the conclusion that Fust has made a compact with Satan and have visited the house to exorcise the demon, and as they cannot remember the proper Latin formula, Fust runs to his printing room, and in five minutes returns with the words printed on slips of paper, one of which he hands to each of the friars. He then exhibits his printing press and explains the use of the types, bursting out into a noble hymn of praise to God for having enabled him to bless mankind with the invention. The monks are satisfied that there is no magic in the business, but are doubtful if the invention will prove an unmixed blessing for the Church.

ASOLANDO: FANCIES AND FACTS.

(1889.)

Asolando: Fancies and Facts.—This was Browning's last volume, published on the day on which he died at Venice, December 12, 1889. "Asolando" has to do with the beautifully situated town of Northern Italy, called Asolo, about nineteen miles from Treviso. The palace-towers of Queen Cornaro of Cyprus overlook the town. "Asolare" is defined as "to disport in the open air, amuse oneself at random." Browning loved the place in his youth, as we may see in his "Pippa Passes" and in "Sordello"; and he was faithful to its attractions in his latest years. The poems which comprise the volume were not all written in his old age, and are of very various dates. The first poems of this volume must have been written in the poet's youth, and were published after lying in his desk for many years. Browning's love never waned to the last.

Prologue.—We are apt to think that it is sad to grow old because in old age we are disillusioned, but in choosing an optic glass we select one that is achromatic, not one that invests objects with unreal rainbow hues. So in age we have parted with falsehood's fancy-haze, and see "the naked very thing." It is better so. Fancy then should be separated from fact.

Rosny.—There does not seem to be any historical incident referred to in the poem; it is probable that Browning invented story and place. Strength in love and victory in death are judged by the maiden of the poem to be the best.

Dubiety.—The poet asks for comfort, a dreamy, hazy sense of being in "luxury's sofa-lap," in his old age cherishing in his musings the memory of his lost, beloved wife.

Now.—Emphasizes the value of "the quintessential moment," a theme on which Browning frequently dilates,—

> The moment eternal—just that and nothing more,

when the assurance comes that love has been definitely won despite of time future and time past.

Humility.—A flower-laden girl drops a careless bud without troubling to pick it up. She has enough without it. A man who finds it thinks himself happy in its possession.

Poetics.—The foolish call their love "My rose," "My swan," "My moon." The poet will have none of it. His love is her human self, and no lower words will describe her.

Summum Bonum is a poem of concentration. So holy a thing is love to the poet that he sees in it all highest truth in the universe, as we see in the honey-bag of one bee the breath and bloom of the year, and in the beauty of a pearl all the wonder of the sea. Love of mankind is a dim reflection of the Love of God.

A Pearl, A Girl.—It is fabled that if you could speak the right word you could call a spirit from a pearl which would make you lord of heaven and

earth. If you utter the right word that evokes for you the love of a girl—you are creation's lord !

Speculative.—The poet would surrender what some call heaven could he recover the inspirations and pure delights of the past.

White Witchcraft.—Magic is of two kinds—divine and evil. Divine is white magic ; black magic is of the Devil. The Canidia referred to is the sorceress of Naples in Horace who tried to bring the moon from heaven. It is recorded in the Life of Browning that the poet in his youth made a pet of a toad.

Bad Dreams.—I. Love has died out of the eyes of the loved one, but with a breaking heart the lover can say—love is still the same for him. II. Is a weird dream of a dance of death and hell in which the dreamer sees the woman he loves. He tells her his strange dream and she replies that her own was just like it. III. Is a dream of a primeval forest and a buried city of pure streets of marble wherein the dreamer walks alone. Suddenly the city is devoured by the forest. The forest represents Nature, the city represents Art. Our nature may be good and true, and art be lovely and pure, but "both in one accurst." IV. Is the pathetic dream of a neglected woman. She is dead and sees in spirit her husband broken and praying at her grave when repentance has come too late.

Inapprehensiveness.—A woman contemplates the weeds growing on an old tower inapprehensive that by her side stands an incarnation of dormant passion needing but a look from her to burst into immediate life.

Which ?—In esteeming the love of a man one lady holds that he must think his lady-love higher than all save God and King. A second values most the man of fine deeds, while the third chooses any wretch who would look to her as his sole saviour. The arbiter thinks this last "seems terribly like what perhaps gains God's preference."

The Cardinal and the Dog.—Cardinal Crescenzio, Papal Legate at the Council of Trent, one night saw a great black dog spring into his chamber with flaming eyes. His servants found no dog; but the Cardinal died in horror, crying aloud to every one to drive away the animal.

The Pope and the Net.—This is an invention of the poet, but Pope Sixtus V suits the poem better than any other.

The Bean-Feast.—Pope Sixtus V was Pope from 1585 to 1590. He was born in humble circumstances, but there is no proof that he was the son of a swineherd as described in the poem. Ever anxious to reform abuses, he made it his business to examine into the condition of the people and see with his own eyes their mode of life.

Muckle-Mouth Meg (i.e. "Big-Mouth Meg").—A Border story of a young laird who was defeated in a foray and taken prisoner. He was to be hanged, but was offered pardon if he would marry "Muckle-mouth Meg." He declared he would rather be hanged than marry a monster. After a week passed in the dungeon, where he was waited on by a winsome lass, he reconsidered his decision on discovering that the pretty maid was "Meg" herself.

Arcades Ambo.—An anti-vivisection poem. The

poet was strongly opposed to the scientific torture of animals, which he called cowardice parallel with that of a soldier who in battle runs away to save his skin.

The Lady and the Painter.—The poem is directed against the savage and wicked custom of wearing the plumage of birds doomed annually to slaughter.

Ponte Dell' Angelo, Venice.—This story of the poem explains why the bridge is called the Angel's Bridge, and why the house beside it has the angel in the escutcheon guarding it from harm. The legend is recorded by Boverio in his Annals, 1552.

Beatrice Signorini was the wife of Romanelli the painter in the time of Pope Urban VIII. Soon after his marriage he fell in love with Artemisia Gentilischi, a celebrated lady painter. She painted him a picture filled with fruit except a space in the centre, in which he was to paint her portrait. This was done, and one day his wife saw it and immediately destroyed the face of her rival in the picture. Her husband, so far from being angry, loved his wife the more. Artemisia's portrait painted by herself is in Hampton Court.

Flute Music, With an Accompaniment.—A dialogue between a man and a woman consequent on the misinterpretation of flute sounds heard at a distance. The man thinks that passion must give birth to such wonderful expression. The lady dispels the fancy-spun notions by telling the prosy fact that the music proceeds from a desk-drudge whose husky tootlings have no romance about them at all. The distance lent the enchantment.

"**Imperante Augusto Natus Est.**"—According to an ancient legend the Emperor Augustus Caesar asked the Sybil whether he should allow himself to be worshipped as a god. The Sybil, after some days of meditation, showed the Emperor an altar, above which he beheld a Virgin and Child, and a voice was heard saying, "This is the altar of the Son of the living God!" On this spot in later times was built the church called the "Ara Coeli." The prophecy of the Sybil rests on some very ancient traditions, Pagan as well as Christian.

Development.—Browning's father was a man of exceptional powers. He was a scholar, a poet in sentiment and expression, and appreciated the excellent in art, and took great pains with the education of his son in the classics.

Rephan.—In Jane Taylor's story, "How it strikes a stranger," Rephan is the name of a star. An angel left his home there moved by vain curiosity to see how mortals lived on Earth. When the idea of death was explained to him, and how eternal happiness or misery depended on a man's conduct here, he lost all interest in wealth and pleasures; his one answer to every invitation to sin was, "I am to die! I am to die!"

Reverie.—The purport of the poem is to reconcile the ideas of Power and Love—to reconcile by proving them to be one. When Power is no longer limited, then is the reign of Love. The poet avows his confidence that somewhere good will praise God unisonous with Power.

Epilogue.—The last lines of Browning's Message to the world are here, and all Browning is concentrated within them. From "Pauline," his first

work, to this his Epitaph, every hour of his working life and every note of his poetry testified to his pure spirit and noble faith. He was—

> One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.

In the spring-tide of his life, writing his first poem, when "all lay in dispute," he believed "in God and truth and love," was "happy, free from doubt or touch of fear," and now, having never once faltered in his faith, fifty-six years after this profession he enters the dark valley with head uplifted, with eye undimmed, sword in hand as becomes the knight Greatheart to fight "the Arch Fear," the best and the last battle of all. He never deigned to listen to the wailing prophets of a decadent age, never asked if life were worth living, nor stayed to wonder why we are here at all. Nothing disturbed the informed serenity of his gifted mind. He had sufficient knowledge and science to assign it the proper place in his equipment and enough sympathy with our mistakes and sins to recognize them as

> Fine faults of growth, brave sins which saint when shriven.

The antidote to the pessimism of a sickly, faithless age is the philosophy of the poet who asked—

> What had I on earth to do
> With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
> Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
> —Being—who?

INDEX

Abt Vogler, 59
Adam, Lilith and Eve, 102
After, 26
Agamemnon of Æschylus, The, 93
Andrea Del Sarto, 52
Another Way of Love, 25
Any Wife to Any Husband, 24
Apollo and The Fates: A Prologue, 109
Apparent Failure, 63
Appearances, 91
Arcades Ambo, 117
Aristophanes' Apology, 65
Artemis Prologizes, 49
Asolando: Fancies and Facts, 114
At the *Mermaid*, 90

Bad Dreams, 116
Balaustion's Adventure, 64
Bean-Feast, The, 117
Bean-Stripe, A; also Apple Eating, 108
Beatrice Signorini, 118
Before, 26
Bernard de Mandeville, 110
Bifurcation, 91
Bishop Blougram's Apology, 53
Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church, The, 53
Blot in the 'Scutcheon, A, 30
Book and the Ring, The, 80
Boot and Saddle, 18
Boy and the Angel, The, 34
By the Fireside, 24

Caliban upon Setebos, 61
Camel-Driver, A, 106
Cardinal and the Dog, The, 117
Cavalier Tunes, 18
Cenciaja, 92
Charles Avison, 112
Cherries, 107
Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came, 40
Christmas-Eve, 43
Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day, 43
Christopher Smart, 111
Cleon, 54
Clive, 98
Colombe's Birthday, 32
Confessional, The, 19
Confessions, 62
Count Gismond, 33
Count Guido Franceschini, 74
Cristina, 20
Cristina and Monaldeschi, 102

Daniel Bartoli, 110
Deaf and Dumb; A Group by Woolner, 62
Death in the Desert, A, 60
"De Gustibus ——", 23
Development, 119
Dis Aliter Visum; or, Le Byron de nos Jours, 58
Doctor ——, 99
Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis, 78
Donald, 101
Dramatic Idyls: First Series, 96
Dramatic Idylls: Second Series, 98
Dramatic Lyrics, 18
Dramatic Romances, 33
Dramatis Personæ, 56
Dubiety, 115

Eagle, The, 105
Earth's Immortalities, 20
Easter-Day, 46
Echetlos, 98
Englishman in Italy, The, 35
Epilogue to Asolando, 119
Epilogue to Dramatis Personæ, 64
Epilogue to Ferishtah's Fancies, 108
Epilogue to Pacchiarotto, 93
Epistle containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician, An, 49
Eurydice to Orpheus: A Picture by Leighton, 62
Evelyn Hope, 21

Face, A, 62
Family, The, 106
Fears and Scruples, 90
Ferishtah's Fancies, 105
Fifine at the Fair, 82
Filippo Baldinucci on the Privilege of Burial, 92
Flight of the Duchess, The, 37
Flower's Name, The, 19
Flute-Music, with an Accompaniment, 118
Forgiveness, A, 91
Fra Lippo Lippi, 51
Francis Furini, 112
Fust and His Friends: An Epilogue, 113

Garden Fancies, 19
George Bubb Dodington, 111
Gerard de Lairesse, 112
Giuseppe Caponsacchi, 75
Give a Rouse, 18
Glove, The, 34
Gold Hair: A Story of Pornic, 58
Grammarian's Funeral, A, 37
Guardian-Angel, The, 27
Guido, 79

Halbert and Hob, 97
Half Rome, 71
Heretic's Tragedy, The, 38
Hervé Riel, 91
Holy Cross Day, 38
Home-Thoughts, from Abroad, 23
Home-Thoughts, from the Sea, 23
House, 90
How it Strikes a Contemporary, 49
How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix, 18
Humility, 115

"Imperante Augusto Natus Est," 119
In a Balcony, 55
In a Gondola, 36
Inapprehensiveness, 116
In a Year, 26
Incident of the French Camp, 33
Inn Album, The, 86
In Three Days, 26
Instans Tyrannus, 34
Italian in England, The, 35
Iván Iványovitch, 97
Ixion, 102

James Lee's Wife, 56
Jochanan-Hakkadosh, 103
Jocoseria, 101
Johannes Agricola in Meditation, 50
Juris Doctor Johannes Baptista-Bottinius, 78

King Victor and King Charles, 16

Laboratory, The, 19
Lady and the Painter, The, 118
La Saisiaz, 94
Last Ride Together, The, 36
Life in a Love, 26
Light Woman, A, 36
Likeness, A, 62
Lost Leader, The, 18
Lost Mistress, The, 20
Love Among the Ruins, 21
Love in a Life, 26
Lovers' Quarrel, A, 21
Luria, 40

Magical Nature, 91
Marching Along, 18
Martin Relph, 96
Mary Wollstonecraft and Fuseli, 102
Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha, 28
May and Death, 62
Meeting at Night, 20
Melon-Seller, The, 105
Memorabilia, 27
Men and Women, 48
Mesmerism, 34
Mihrab Shah, 106
Misconceptions, 25
Mr. Sludge, "The Medium," 63
Muckle-Mouth Meg, 117
Muléykeh, 99
My Last Duchess, 33
My Star, 24

Nationality in Drinks, 19
Natural Magic, 91
Ned Bratts, 98
Never the Time and the Place, 103
Now, 115
Numpholeptos, 91

Old Pictures in Florence, 22
One Way of Love, 25
One Word More, 55
Other Half Rome, The, 73

Pacchiarotto, and how he worked in Distemper, etc., 89
Pambo, 104
Pan and Luna, 100
Paracelsus, 2
Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day, 109
Parting at Morning, 20
Patriot, The, 33
Pauline, 1
Pearl, A Girl, A, 115
Pheidippides, 97
Pictor Ignotus, 51
Pied Piper of Hamelin, The, 37
Pietro of Abano, 99
Pillar at Sebzevar, A, 108
Pippa Passes, 13
Pisgah Sights, 90
Plot-Culture, 107
Poetics, 115
Pompilia, 76
Ponte dell' Angelo, Venice, 118
Pope and The Net, The, 117
Pope, The, 78
Popularity, 27
Porphyria's Lover, 39
Pretty Woman, A, 25
Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Saviour of Society, 81
Prologue to Asalando, 114
Prologue to Ferishtah's Fancies, 105
Prologue to Pacchiarotto, 89
Prospice, 62
Protus, 38

Rabbi Ben Ezra, 59
Red Cotton Night-Cap Country; or, Turf and Towers, 84
Rephan, 119
Respectability, 26
Return of the Druses, The, 28
Reverie, 119
Ring and the Book, The, 68
Rosny, 115
Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli, 55

St. Martin's Summer, 91
Saul, 23
Serenade at the Villa, A, 25
Shah Abbas, 106
Shop, 90
Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis, 19
Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister, 19
Solomon and Balkis, 101
Song, 20
Sordello, 8
Soul's Tragedy, A, 42
Speculative, 116
Statue and the Bust, The, 39
Strafford, 7
Summum Bonum, 115
Sun, The. 106

Tertium Quid, 74
Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr, 18
Time's Revenges, 34
Toccata of Galuppi's, A, 22
Too Late, 59
"Transcendentalism," 48
Twins, The, 36
Two Camels, 107
Two in the Campagna, 25
Two Poets of Croisic, The, 95

Up at a Villa—Down in the City, 21

"Wanting is—What?" 101
Waring, 36
Which? 117
White Witchcraft, 116
Woman's Last Word, A, 20
Women and Roses, 26
Worst of It, The, 58

Youth and Art, 62

Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.